Finding of No Significant Impact

Shiloh Road Corridor

May 2007

STPU 1031(2) Control Number 4666

Montana Department of Transportation

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U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

for

Project Number: STPU 1031(2)
Project Name: Shiloh Road Corridor
Control Number: 4666

in

Yellowstone County, Montana

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have determined that the Preferred Alternative, as described in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) dated December 2006, will have no significant impact on the human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the December 2006 EA. After independent evaluation of the EA, MDT and FHWA conclude that the EA adequately and accurately discusses the needs, environmental issues and environmental impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. The EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. MDT and FHWA take full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the December 2006 EA.

For purposes of compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (ARM 17.4.609(3)(j) and ARM 18.2.239(3)(j)), this FONSI and conclusion that an EIS is not required should be considered part of the EA.

Montana Department of Transportation — Date 5/1/07

Federal Highway Administration — Date 05/02/2007

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1.0 Coordination Process

The proposed action has been coordinated with the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The Notice of Availability for the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Nationwide Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations was publicized in several area newspapers and broadcast media, as well as in a project newsletter. Information was also provided on the public hearing for the project.

1.1 Press Release and Advertising

A press release was distributed to the following locations on January 5 and 22, 2007:

KTVQ-TV	KFBB	KULR
KBLG	KHMT-TV	KULR-8
KRKX	KMHK	Billings Gazette
KRZN	KMZK	Billings Outpost
KYYA	KURL	Billings Times
KBUL	KRZN 2	
KCTR	KSVI-TV	

Display ads were placed in the Billings Gazette on January 21, 2007 and February 4, 2007. Copies of the advertising notice and press release are contained in Appendix B. In addition, a newsletter announcing the public hearing and the availability of the EA is included in Appendix B. The public comment period began on January 8, 2007 and ended on February 12, 2007.

1.2 Availability of EA

Copies of the EA were available for review beginning January 8, 2007 at the following locations:

MDT Billings District Offices, 424 Morey Street, Billings

City of Billings, Planning and Community Service Dept., 510 N. Broadway, Billings

MSU Billings Library, 1500 University Drive, Billings

Will James Middle School, 1200 30th Street West, Billings

Copies of the EA were available upon request from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and the EA was also available on the MDT website (http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml). State and federal agencies and local entities were provided with a copy of the EA. The distribution list is included in Appendix B. A complete version of the EA is included in Appendix C.

1.3 Public Hearing and Comments

The Public Hearing for the EA occurred on Tuesday, February 6, 2007 at Faith Evangelical Church, 3145 Sweetwater Drive, Billings from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The event included an open house, presentation with question and answer period, and the formal Public Hearing. The Public Hearing was attended by 102 people. Copies of the sign-in sheet and the transcript are contained in Appendix A. Fifteen individuals offered comments at the public hearing. These comments and MDT responses are provided in Appendix A.

MDT received written comments from two representatives of federal and local agencies as well as 35 individuals during the public comment period. The verbal comments received during the Public Hearing and written comments received during the public comment period are provided in Appendix A, along with responses from MDT. A number of the comments submitted stated support for the Preferred Alternative. Some of these comments specified additional roadway capacity, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and roundabouts to improve traffic flow and aesthetics as reasons for supporting the Preferred Alternative. The comments indicating concerns with the Preferred Alternative focused on the following main issues: 1) traffic safety and operations at roundabouts, including lack of driver familiarity with roundabouts, 2) pedestrian/bicycle access and safety, 3) landscaping and 4) noise.

Traffic Safety and Operations at Roundabouts

Traffic safety and operations at roundabouts, including lack of driver familiarity with roundabouts, was a public concern. Based on these concerns, commenters suggested changing the Preferred Alternative to include traffic signals rather than roundabouts. As discussed in the EA, roundabouts have been selected over traffic signals because, for this corridor, roundabouts provide potentially greater reduction in crash rates and severity and better level-of-service (LOS). Statistics available for roundabouts constructed across the United States, including multi-lane roundabouts, indicate a reduced frequency of crashes and crash severity when compared to signalized and all-way stop controlled intersections. The LOS of the roundabouts at the eight intersections for the project are predicted to operate at an overall LOS C or better in both the morning and evening peak hours, which would be an improvement over the No Build Alternative conditions and slightly better than the traffic signal alternatives.

There was a concern that drivers not familiar with roundabouts would be confused and cause accidents, or avoid the roundabouts. As with all roadway projects, there will be a comprehensive signing and striping plan to clearly inform the driver of how to maneuver through the modern roundabouts. To address the lack of driver familiarity with roundabouts, MDT will provide a public information program describing roundabouts. As part of this program, MDT's website will provide basic information regarding roundabouts, including why MDT wants to utilize roundabouts and how pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists can safely maneuver through them. MDT's public information program may also include informational brochures to be placed at the Airport, Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center, local businesses, and area hotels. These measures will help to improve drivers' understanding of modern roundabouts and minimize confusion for drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Access and Safety

The ability of pedestrians and bicyclists to cross Shiloh Road and cross streets at major intersections was also a concern of the public. Some members of the public expressed the desire to provide additional grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle crossings in the corridor. The *Heritage Trail Plan* proposed grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle crossings at the proposed Hogan's Slough multi-use trail, the proposed primary bikeway at Monad Road, and the proposed secondary bikeway at Howard Avenue, which traverses the MSU Billings College of Technology campus. MDT determined that grade-separated crossings at these locations were not feasible for the following reasons.

At the Hogan's Slough multi-use trail, a pedestrian/bicycle crossing under Shiloh Road must be kept above Hogan's Slough water surface elevation because of potential flooding risks. This would require elevating the existing roadway which would alter or increase flood risks associated with Hogan's Slough. The Shiloh Road Corridor project proposes to construct the Shiloh roadway to match existing grade to not aggravate flooding risks associated with Hogan's Slough. A pedestrian/bicycle overpass at this location would also result in wetland impacts related to constructing the bridge and associated approach ramps. In addition, overpasses at this location would not be consistent with the corridor character design criterion to minimize adverse aesthetic impacts associated with design features.

At the Monad Road primary bikeway a below-grade crossing of Shiloh Road would lie in the Shiloh Drain. This could result in safety risks to users due to potential inundation during storm events due to rising waters in Shiloh Drain or extensive and costly water management to control flooding. In addition, the City of Billings is investigating the use of Shiloh Drain for storm water detention; therefore, placing the below-grade path in the Shiloh Drain at this location could make it difficult to operate and maintain the pedestrian/bicycle underpass. An above-grade crossing to the north or south side of Monad Road was also considered. Existing development would preclude the construction of ramps and structures for the overpass in the southeast corner of the intersection. If an overpass was located on the north side, the park/open space area for the mobile home community in the northeast corner of the intersection would also be adversely affected through the removal of trees and the acquisition of land. In addition, overpasses at this location would not be consistent with the corridor character design criterion to minimize adverse aesthetic impacts associated with design features.

At the secondary bikeway at Howard Avenue, a pedestrian/bicycle crossing under Shiloh Road would require a complex design because the structure would lie in the Shiloh Drain on the west side of Shiloh Road. Also, wetlands in this area of Shiloh Drain would be impacted. In addition, a below-grade crossing at this location could also be inundated during storm events due to rising waters in Shiloh Drain. Flooding of the below-grade crossing could result in potential safety risks to users or extensive water management to control flooding, which would be costly. Construction of a pedestrian/bicycle overpass at this location could also require extensive right-of-way (ROW) for the eastern approach due to the difference in elevation between the roadway and adjacent properties. This extensive land requirement would increase costs. In addition, overpasses at this location

would not be consistent with the corridor character design criterion to minimize adverse aesthetic impacts associated with design features.

Although grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle crossings are not feasible at the above mentioned locations, the Shiloh Road project will provide pedestrian connections on both sides of Shiloh Road from Poly Drive to the existing Colton Boulevard underpass. This will improve access to this underpass and provide a crossing opportunity that is separated from motorized traffic. In addition, during the EA public comment period, a pedestrian/bicycle underpass was proposed between Broadwater Avenue and Grand Avenue by a landowner. MDT will work with the landowner and the City of Billings during final design regarding the proposed pedestrian/bicycle underpass to determine if it is feasible or desirable in this location.

Additionally, there were comments regarding pedestrian/bicycle safety at roundabouts and compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The roundabouts and pedestrian crossings will be designed to federal and state standards. Vehicular speeds at the roundabout intersections would be moderated by the geometric design elements (splitter islands, circular path) of the intersection. The existing intersections have no geometric design elements to moderate vehicular speeds. Moderated speeds do make the pedestrian environment safer than an environment without moderated speeds. This project would implement appropriate design features for compliance with ADA. In accordance with ADA guidance, visual aids, such as marked crosswalks, appropriate signage, or other potential measures would assist the hearing impaired. Orientation aids, such as truncated domes on the ADA ramps, and possibly landscaping, or other aids would assist visually impaired pedestrians in the reasonably safe orientation and crossing of the accessible route provided at the roundabouts.

Landscaping

Landscaping issues were related to the type of landscaping, maintenance responsibilities, and costs associated with maintenance. The landscaping as part of the project will be in a manner consistent with whatever maintenance funds are budgeted for this project. Upon project approval, landscaping will be determined during final design, and in consultation with the City of Billings. MDT will install the landscaping and the City will be responsible for maintaining the landscaping in the right-of-way along Shiloh Road in all areas that are in the City of Billings or in Yellowstone County owned right-of-way where the City and Yellowstone County have a maintenance agreement.

Noise

Traffic-related noise was a public concern, specifically at the Ponderosa Townhomes, which are close to the roadway; however, noise is a concern on the entire project. Noise modeling showed that multiple Category B receptor locations would be impacted by noise in the Design Year. Those receptors represent single-family homes, townhomes, parks, proposed developments, assisted living facilities, a church, and a college. Because of those projected impacts, noise abatement was considered.

MDT policy states that noise abatement in the form of berms or barriers must be considered reasonable and feasible to be incorporated into the project. “Feasibility” deals

with the constructability of the abatement. Barriers cannot be designed to eliminate traffic noise completely. However, a 6-decibel (dBA) reduction in noise is considered noticeable. MDT policy states that a minimum 6-dBA reduction in noise is required for abatement to be considered effective. Generally, to be effective, a noise barrier or berm must be continuous, with no breaks for cross streets or driveways, and it must break the line of sight between the receivers and the noise source, which in this case would be Shiloh Road. "Reasonableness" deals with more subjective criteria, such as the public's desires for abatement, cost of abatement and number of receivers benefited, overall noise levels and the increase in noise, timing of development, and whether the City/County planners consider traffic noise in developments next to busy roadways. One way to quantify the "reasonableness" of abatement is to calculate its cost-effectiveness index (CEI). Generally, MDT considers a CEI of $4,200 or less a reasonable cost.

MDT has recently revisited the Shiloh Road noise model to review the underlying model assumptions and to account for design evolution that has occurred since the last model runs. In the recent model runs, analyses were refined by splitting the original analysis area into four smaller areas. Model runs were based on current information related to preliminary design of the Shiloh Road Preferred Alternative. Model inputs also included an estimated noise barrier planning cost. Information gained from the model runs includes the approximate length and height of an effective noise barrier, approximate average insertion loss (reduction in noise), projected Design Year noise levels, and estimated CEI for the barrier.

The four areas of analysis are on the east side of Shiloh Road and are as follows.

Location 1: Big Ditch south to Parkhill Drive;

Location 2: Monad Road north to just beyond the last mobile home in the Shiloh Village Mobile Home Park (with a break in the barrier at the access street);

Location 3: Monad Road south to Decathlon Parkway; and

Location 4: Decathlon Parkway south to Olympic Boulevard.

Location 1 includes the Fox Run Townhomes. That development was platted in 1997. A barrier in this location would be approximately 153 m (502 ft) long and 3 m (9.8 ft) high. The barrier would benefit eight dwelling units, with an average insertion loss (reduction in noise) of 7.2 dBA. Even second floor units, modeled at 4 m (13.1 ft) above the ground level, are predicted to have reduced noise levels due to the barrier. Design Year noise levels are projected to be reduced between 60 and 63 dBA. The CEI of this barrier is approximately $3,005, which would be considered cost-effective. Estimated cost of this barrier is $172,810.

Location 2 includes the Shiloh Village Mobile Home Park that was first platted in 1975. A barrier in this location would have to include a break in the barrier to allow for the access road. The barrier would extend approximately 368 m (1,207 ft) north of and 243 m (797 ft) south of the access road. The barrier would be 3.5 m (11.5 ft) high, benefit 36 homes (including 11 in the second row) and provide an average insertion loss of 7.1 dBA. Design Year noise levels are projected to be reduced between 59 and 62 dBA in the first

row. The CEI for this barrier is approximately $3,134, which would be considered cost-effective. Estimated cost of this barrier is $804,866.

Location 3 includes the northern part of the Olympic subdivision, from Monad Road to Decathlon Parkway. The development in this area was platted in 1979. The barrier would be 302 m (991 ft) long and 3.5 m (11.5 ft) high. The barrier would benefit nine residential units, with an average insertion loss of 8.1 dBA. Design Year noise levels are projected to be between 56 and 62 dBA. The CEI for this barrier is approximately $5,426, which exceeds the reasonable CEI cost-effectiveness criterion of $4,200. Estimated cost of this barrier is $397,169.

Location 4 includes the area from Decathlon Parkway to Olympic Boulevard, which includes the Ponderosa and Beartooth Townhomes. This development was also platted in 1979. A barrier 149 m (489 ft) long and 3 m (9.8 ft) high would benefit five residential units, with an average insertion loss of 6.7 dBA. Design Year noise levels would be reduced between 61 and 64 dBA. The CEI for this barrier is $5,051. Estimated cost of this barrier is $168,185. By raising the height of this barrier to 3.5 (11.5 ft), one additional home would benefit. Additionally, the average insertion loss would increase to 7.7 dBA, which would lower Design Year noise levels between 59 and 62 dBA. The CEI would drop to $4,229 and the estimated cost of the barrier would increase to $196,216. The calculated value exceeds the reasonable CEI cost-effectiveness criterion.

Discussion

Shiloh Road itself has changed little since about 1956. At that time, land use in the area was primarily agricultural. Development in the last 20 years has lead to rapid growth in residential housing and commercial businesses. At this time, much of the area of Shiloh Road is mixed residential and commercial development. For this reason, it is not reasonable to even consider noise mitigation in some areas. For example, the area between Olympic Boulevard and King Avenue is mixed-use. Impacted receivers are present at the southeast corner of Olympic Boulevard and Shiloh Road, but commercial development is slated for the area south of there. For that reason, it is not feasible or reasonable to build a protective noise wall. The same is true in the area north of Grand Avenue and south of the Fox Run Townhomes (south of Parkhill Drive).

The age of existing development is an important factor in deciding whether to provide noise abatement. Generally, more consideration for noise abatement is applied to homes that have been in existence for longer periods of time. The Shiloh Village Mobile Home Park was platted in 1975. The Olympic subdivision was platted in 1979. The ages of these developments probably explain why some of those homes are now so close to Shiloh Road. Likely, those developments were platted prior to the amount of traffic that now occurs on Shiloh Road. Because those developments pre-date the traffic conditions, it seems logical that they would receive more consideration for noise abatement than newer developments such as the Fox Run Townhomes (Big Ditch south to Parkhill Drive), even though the CEI for the Olympic Developments is higher.

The close proximity of the impacted homes to Shiloh Road produces considerable noise reduction benefit with a relatively short barrier (less than 3.5 meters or 11.5 feet). CEI decreases as wall height increases, provided there are still homes to benefit. Because of

this fact a higher wall, while exceeding the criteria of a 6-dBA reduction in noise, is more protective and thus more cost effective.

Model Inputs and Outputs

It is important to stress that the noise model makes projections based on information inputs. If those information inputs change, changes to the model outputs should be expected.

One of the inputs is the proposed design of the Shiloh Road project. As the design process continues to evolve, minor adjustments may be made to the vertical and/or horizontal alignment of the proposed roadway. A qualified noise professional will need to evaluate any changes that occur in final design to conclude if those changes necessitate revisiting the noise model.

Another important input is the barrier planning cost, which is an estimate based on price quotes for installed pre-formed or cast-in-place concrete and fiberglass walls. If the price of the barriers fluctuates, the CEI could increase or decrease enough to make a particular barrier rise above or fall below the $4,200 criterion. MDT will continue to monitor noise barrier costs as the design process moves forward.

Commitments

Based on the studies thus far completed, MDT anticipates installation of highway traffic noise abatement measures in the form of barriers at two of the locations described above (Location 1: Big Ditch south to Parkhill Drive and Location 2: Monad Road north past mobile homes). The other locations may be included if costs are found to be more reasonable and public desire for abatement is high.

A final decision on the installation of the abatement measures will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the associated public involvement process with the affected landowners. Barriers will not be constructed if the final CEI calculations (based on final design and current costs) indicate the barriers are not cost-effective or if a majority of landowners at the specific, affected areas do not support the barrier installation. Barriers will be constructed if the final CEI calculations (based on final design and current costs) indicate the barriers are cost-effective and if a majority of landowners at the specific, affected areas support the barrier installation.

Land-Use Planning and Noise-Mitigated Developments

The development in the area is mostly new and growth is rapid. To prevent future traffic noise impacts at new developments, local planners would need to practice noise-compatible land use planning and noise-mitigated development. Generally, noise compatible land use planning has positive effects on a development's aesthetics, property values, and quality of life for residents.

Other Comments

Comments were also received from three individuals after the close of the public comment period; therefore, these comments are not included in Appendix A. However, these comments were reviewed and were found to be similar to other comments

submitted or were not substantive. One of the commenters stated support for the use of roundabouts at intersections on Shiloh Road, specifically the benefits of energy and resource conservation, cost effectiveness, and efficiency of roundabouts compared to traffic signals. Similar to other comments received during the public comment period, one commenter was concerned with the type of landscaping being provided.

The third commenter provided comments regarding the availability of the EA for review; compensation for property acquisition; and the project's potential impacts to geologic resources, wildlife, vegetation, farmland, and air quality. Except for geologic resources, the impact analysis for these topics is presented in the EA. Geologic resources was dismissed from detailed analysis because the effects to these resources from the proposed project would be negligible and without controversy.

1.4 Other Federal Requirements

It should be noted that in accordance with 23 US Code (USC) 134(g) and (h) and FHWA fiscal constraint requirements, the funding for completion of the project through construction is identified in the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) fiscally-constrained long-range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

1.5 Availability of FONSI

The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Clarifications to the EA can be viewed at the MDT website address of http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml. State, federal, and local entities will be notified by letter that this FONSI has been signed.

2.0 Clarifications to the EA

This section identifies clarifications to the EA (December 2006) based on comments received and the availability of new information. Page numbers refer to the EA (December 2006) which is provided in Appendix C. Text deleted is shown in strikeout font (for example, ~~project area~~). Text added is shown as underlined (for example, <u>project area</u>).

2.1 Summary

Page S-4, Paragraph 3, Edit the first sentence as follows:

> ~~Due to the provision of a multi-use path and sidewalk from Poly Drive to the ZooMontana access road, and crosswalks at the intersections, the build alternatives provide improved safety for pedestrian and bicyclists compared to the No Build Alternative.~~

Page S-4, Paragraph 3, Edit the second sentence as follows:

> Benefits of traffic signals compared to roundabouts include driver and pedestrian familiarity, ~~and the~~ visual <u>cues, including signals and traffic stopping at intersection,</u> and audible ~~pedestrian~~ cues<u>, related to traffic stopping at signals,</u>

which ~~from signals~~ help pedestrians with cognitive disabilities and visual impairments.

Page S-7, Access Management Plan, Edit the fourth bullet as follows:

Right-in, right-out access would be implemented at appropriate existing locations and at other locations consistent with the locations or spacing guidelines identified in MDT's Access Management Plan to be developed for this project.

Page S-7, Access Management Plan, Edit the fifth bullet as follows:

After the Access Management Plan is finalized, it would be implemented by MDT in conjunction with an amended access control resolution approved by the Montana Transportation Commission.

Page S-7, Access Management Plan, Edit the sixth bullet as follows:

Future access that is not constructed as part of this project would be considered through the City and County platting and/or access permitting process, as applicable. Future access that adheres to the above criteria may be approved by the City or County. Future access that does not adhere to the above criteria must be recommended for approval by the City or County and must be approved by the Montana Transportation Commission.

Page S-14, Table S.1, Pedestrians and Bicycles - Intersections, Edit column 2 as follows:

No change.

Lack of crosswalks, except at the Grand Avenue and Poly Drive intersections with Shiloh Road. However, even at the crosswalks pedestrian safety is not ensured (i.e. red-light running at signalized intersections, motorists failing to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, and right-turns-on-red at signalized intersections, etc.).

Shorter crossing distances, except at Grand Avenue.

No pedestrian ~~phasing at existing~~ signals exist within corridor except at the Grand Avenue intersection.

For the safety of pedestrians with visual impairments and cognitive disabilities, benefits of ~~V~~visual cues, including signals and traffic stopping at intersection, and audible ~~pedestrian~~ cues ~~from~~, related to traffic stopping at signals, exist at some intersections.

Page S-14, Table S.1, Pedestrians and Bicycles - Intersections, Edit column 3 as follows:

~~Safety improved by providing~~ C~~c~~rosswalks provided at signalized intersections. However, even at the crosswalks pedestrian safety is not ensured (i.e. red-light

running at signalized intersections, motorists failing to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, and right-turns-on-red at signalized intersections, etc.).

Larger turning radii create longer crossing distances than under the No Build Alternative.

Drivers are required to yield to pedestrians. Pedestrian signals offer ~~"protected"~~ designated crossing time for pedestrians.

For the safety of pedestrians with visual impairments and cognitive disabilities, benefits of ~~V~~visual cues, including signals and traffic stopping at intersection, and audible ~~pedestrian~~ cues ~~from~~, related to traffic stopping at signals ~~improve safety for pedestrians with cognitive disabilities and visual impairments~~, exist at more intersections than under the No Build Alternative.

Page S-14, Table S.1, Pedestrians and Bicycles - Intersections, Edit column 4 as follows:

~~Safety improved by providing c~~ Crosswalks provided at roundabouts. However, even at the crosswalks pedestrian safety is not ensured (i.e. red-light running at signalized intersections, motorists failing to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, and right-turns-on-red at signalized intersections, etc.).

In general, total crossing distances are longer than under the No Build Alternative, but shorter than signalized alternatives and pedestrian refuge areas enable pedestrians to consider one direction of traffic at a time.

Drivers are required to yield to pedestrians. Because there are no signals, there is no ~~"protected"~~ designated crossing time.

~~For the~~ Safety ~~of pedestrians with visual impairments and cognitive disabilities, benefits is reduced compared with the signalized alternatives due to lack~~ of visual cues, including signals and traffic stopping at intersection, and audible ~~pedestrian~~ cues, related to traffic stopping at signals, do not exist for pedestrians with visual impairments and cognitive disabilities.

Page S-17, Table S.1, Land Use and Local Plans - Land Use Change, Edit columns 3-6, as follows:

Adjacent agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential land would be converted to transportation ~~and recreation~~ uses within proposed ROW and/or easements.

Page S-22, Table S.1, Visual Resources - Visual Quality, Edit column 3, third paragraph, as follows:

Some mature vegetation would be removed. Potential for installation of noise abatement measures at specific locations, if any, to be determined during final design.

Page S-30, Table S.2, Noise - Receptors, Edit column 3, first sentence as follows:

> No feasible or reasonable noise mitigation was identified for existing receptors as of December 2006. During final design, barrier construction will be reassessed to identify specific locations at which noise mitigation may be feasible and reasonable.

Page S-31, Table S.2, Insert following rows above Water Resources/Quality:

Visual Resources		
Visual Quality	Potential implementation of noise abatement measures at specific locations.	A final decision on the installation of the noise abatement measures will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the associated public involvement process with the affected landowners. Aesthetic issues, if any, will be considered as part of this process in final design.

Page S-36, Table S.2, Wildlife and Migratory Birds, Edit column 2 as follows:

> Potential impacts to wildlife and migratory birds from water quality degradation from work in and near water bodies in the area.
>
> Potential impacts to bats during construction activities at Hogan's Slough.

Page S-36, Table S.2, Wildlife and Migratory Birds, Edit column 3, paragraph 2 as follows:

> Mitigation measures described under the Water Resources/Quality section will minimize impacts to wildlife and migratory bird habitat.
>
> The Hogan's Slough Bridge will be rechecked for potential bat activity closer to the start of construction. If bats are found on the Hogan's Slough Bridge, MDT will contact the MFWP Native Species Specialists for further input.

2.2 Purpose and Need

Page 1-3, Paragraph 1, Edit first sentence as follows:

> Shiloh Road is a two-lane, ~~City-classified~~ urban principal arterial (pending approval of the Montana Transportation Commission and the FHWA), which was constructed in 1956.

Page 1-4, Paragraph 3, Edit fourth sentence as follows:

> This bill authorized $10 million toward the funding for the Shiloh Road Corridor project, which would cover a portion of the approximately ~~$30~~ 37.2 million required for administration fees, analysis, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and construction of the preferred alternative.

Page 1-5, Paragraph 6, Insert the following sentence between the first and second sentence:

It should be noted that the City of Billings functional classification criteria and system are different than the federal criteria and system that MDT recognizes.

2.3 Alternatives

Page 2-5, Paragraph 7, Edit fifth sentence as follows:

Those two intersections currently have no turn lanes~~,~~. ~~but MDT plans to install a southbound left-turn lane at the Monad Road intersection in 2006.~~

Page 2-26, Access Management Plan, Edit fourth bullet as follows:

Right-in, right-out access would be implemented at appropriate existing locations and at other locations consistent with the locations or spacing guidelines identified in MDT's Access Management Plan to be developed for this project.

Page 2-26, Access Management Plan, Edit fifth bullet as follows:

After the Access Management Plan is finalized, it would be implemented by MDT in conjunction with an amended access control resolution approved by the Montana Transportation Commission.

Page 2-26, Access Management Plan, Edit sixth bullet as follows:

Future access that is not constructed as part of this project would be considered through the City and County platting and/or access permitting process, as applicable. Future access that adheres to the above criteria may be approved by the City or County. Future access that does not adhere to the above criteria must be recommended for approval by the City or County and must be approved by the Montana Transportation Commission.

2.4 Impacts

Page 3-4, Paragraph 2, Edit second sentence as follows:

The Grand Avenue and King Avenue intersections ~~is~~ are already signalized, but would receive signal improvements.

Page 3-6, Paragraph 1, Edit second sentence as follows:

The Grand Avenue and King Avenue intersections ~~is~~ are already signalized, but would receive signal improvements.

Page 3-6, Paragraph 1, Edit ninth sentence as follows:

Under this alternative, traffic would increase on Shiloh Road, to a greater degree than under the Traffic Signals or Roundabouts at Arterials Alternatives (Engineering, Inc. July 2005, *Preliminary Traffic Report* and October 2006, *Traffic Report Technical Memorandum*).

Page 3-7, Paragraph 1, Edit fifth sentence as follows:

> Similar to the Traffic Signals at Arterials and Major Development Alternative, traffic would increase on Shiloh Road, to a greater degree than under the Traffic Signals or Roundabouts at Arterials Alternatives (Engineering, Inc. July 2005, *Preliminary Traffic Report* and October 2006, *Traffic Report Technical Memorandum*).

Page 3-14, Paragraph 3, Edit last sentence as follows:

> ~~Monad Road intersection has been identified as eligible for safety funding due to the frequency and type of crashes there, and a southbound left-turn lane is scheduled to be constructed in 2007.~~

Page 3-20, Paragraph 4, Edit third sentence as follows:

> The pedestrian signals would offer ~~"protected"~~ designated crossing times.

Page 3-20, Paragraph 4, Edit fourth sentence as follows:

> Signalized intersections offer explicit, positive guidance to pedestrians by way of visual and audible pedestrian indications, including signals and traffic stopping at intersection.

Page 3-21, Paragraph 2, Edit third sentence as follows:

> As such, roundabouts do not offer a ~~"protected"~~ designated time for pedestrians to cross, but pedestrians always have the right-of-way in the crosswalk.

Page 3-28, Paragraph 1, Edit as follows:

> Although some construction and ROW impacts to community resources would occur, the proposed improvements would benefit these resources through improved vehicular access and safety and pedestrian access ~~and safety~~.

Page 3-38, Paragraph 2, Edit first sentence as follows:

> The primary land use changes related to the build alternatives would be the change from roadway-adjacent agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential land to transportation ~~and/or recreation~~ uses ~~(multi-use path)~~ within the proposed Shiloh Road ROW and/or easements.

Page 3-54, Barriers and Berms, Edit last sentence as follows:

> Therefore, barrier construction for this project is not a reasonable noise mitigation measure as of December 2006. During final design, barrier construction will be reassessed to identify specific locations at which noise mitigation may be feasible and reasonable.

Page 3-55, Summary, Edit first sentence as follows:

No feasible or reasonable noise mitigation was identified for existing receptors as of December 2006. During final design, barrier construction will be reassessed to identify specific locations at which noise mitigation may be feasible and reasonable.

Page 3-58, Paragraph 5, Edit first sentence as follows:

The Canyon Creek Ditch, which was constructed by the Canyon Creek Ditch Company in 1883, crosses Shiloh Road just north of the access to ZooMontana ~~Zoo Drive~~.

Page 3-62, After Paragraph 5 (before Mitigation), Insert following:

During final design, noise abatement measures such as barriers may be reassessed to determine if they are feasible and reasonable for specific locations. The impact of proposed noise abatement measures on the views of the adjacent property owners is one of the criteria that will be assessed in determining the reasonableness of providing barriers for noise mitigation. From the perspective of the roadway corridor pedestrians or drivers, it is not likely that the noise abatement measures would impede the views of the Rimrocks. The impact of the noise abatement measures on the overall visual unity of the road corridor cannot be determined until final design. The degree of impact, if any, would depend on the visual prominence of the noise abatement measure (i.e. noise barrier) which is affected by the corridor landscaping and the specifics of the design, both of which will be determined during final design.

Page 3-62, Paragraph 6, After first sentence insert:

A final decision on the installation of the noise abatement measures will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the associated public involvement process with the affected landowners. Aesthetic issues, if any, would be considered as part of this process in final design.

Page 3-62, Paragraph 6, Edit last sentence as follows:

~~Therefore, mitigation would not be required.~~

Page 3-65, Paragraph 2 and 3, Edit as follows:

Canyon Creek is the only water body in the study area listed in the Section 303(d) ~~2004~~ 2006 report. Canyon Creek flows under Shiloh Road just outside of the southern project limit and reaches the confluence with the Yellowstone River approximately 2.3 km (+/- 1.4 mi) southeast of the southern project limit. The Yellowstone River is also listed in the ~~2004~~ 2006 report, but is outside the study area. Both of these water bodies have been listed continuously since 1996.

The ~~2004~~ 2006 Report identified the following probably impaired uses, causes, and sources for Canyon Creek:

- Probable Impaired Uses: aquatic life support; cold water fishery ~~trout~~
- Probable Causes: flow alteration
- Probable Sources: ~~hydromodification, flow regulation/modification~~ other flow regime alterations

Page 3-65, Last paragraph, Edit second sentence as follows:

> The WEMP, which was never ~~finalized~~ adopted, documents the (1991) existing conditions for storm water drainage west of Shiloh Road and north of King Avenue.

Page 3-69, Paragraph 2, Edit first sentence as follows:

> Shiloh Road crosses the Canyon Creek Ditch directly north of the access to ZooMontana ~~Zoo Drive~~.

Page 3-89, First paragraph, Edit as follows:

> Mitigation measures described under Water Resources/Quality will minimize impacts to wildlife and migratory bird habitat.
>
> The Hogan's Slough Bridge will be rechecked for potential bat activity closer to the start of construction. If bats are found on the Hogan's Slough Bridge, MDT will contact the MFWP Native Species Specialists for further input.

3.0 Response to Comments and Questions on the EA and Nationwide Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations

The Public Hearing for the Shiloh Road Corridor EA was held on February 6, 2007. A copy of the transcript from the Public Hearing is included in Appendix A. During the public comment period, a total of 52 comments were received and are included in Appendix A. Comments 1 through 15 were received during the public hearing presentation; all other comments were written comments. Responses to all 52 comments are also included in Appendix A.

4.0 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation

4.1 Summary of Impacts

Table 1 summarizes the impacts of the No Build Alternative and Preferred Alternative for each of the impact topics discussed in the EA. The Selected Alternative improves mobility and safety in the Shiloh Road corridor between Canyon Creek and Poly Drive by increasing roadway capacity and providing bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements. Proposed improvements under the Selected Alternative include access management, intersection control, a corridor typical section which includes roadway widening, sidewalk and multi-use path, and design treatments such as landscaping, lighting, stormwater management, and improved clear zones.

Table 1. Summary of Estimated Potential Impacts

Topic Area	No Build Alternative	Selected Alternative
Traffic		
Traffic Patterns	Traffic volumes and congestion would increase on both Shiloh Road and side-streets that exit and enter on Shiloh Road.	Traffic volumes would increase on Shiloh Road; however, congestion would be minimal due to the proposed improvements. Traffic volumes and congestion would decrease on side-streets that exit and enter on Shiloh Road.
LOS at Major Intersections During PM Peak Hour in 2027	All intersections projected to operate at LOS E or F.	Most roundabout intersections projected to operate at LOS B; Grand Avenue would operate at LOS C.
Travel Time and Average Speed (Between Canyon Creek Bridge and Poly Drive) in 2027 (Northbound / Southbound)	45.0/48.8 min. 10 km/h (6.1 mph)/9 km/h (5.6 mph)	8.0/8.0 min. 53.6 km/h (33 mph)/56.6 km/h (35 mph)
Consistency with *Billings Urban Area 2005 Transportation Plan* and MDT Design Guidelines for Achieving Minimum Acceptable LOS (LOS C)	Inconsistent, does not achieve LOS C or better.	Consistent, achieves LOS C or better.
Access		
Access Management	No access management. 107 existing accesses in project area. New accesses would be per City and County platting and/or access permitting process.	Access management implemented. Eliminated or consolidated 17 existing accesses (5 commercial, 7 field, 2 church, and 3 residential accesses). Access restricted to right-in and right-out or ¾ access except at eight roundabouts. Accommodates approximately 12 new accesses (3 built under the proposed project and 9 built by others in the future).
Restricted Access Can Result in Out-of-Direction Travel	No change; minimal out-of-direction travel.	More out-of-direction travel than No Build Alternative. Roundabouts offer convenient u-turns.
Public Streets	Full access provided at all public streets in corridor.	Full access limited to 20 streets and access restricted at 10 streets.
Private Access	Full access provided at all but 3 private streets/driveways. Access restricted to right-in and right-out at 3 private accesses.	South of Colton Boulevard most private accesses restricted to right-in and right-out. Left-turns would be provided where appropriate and would be determined during final design and included as part of the Access Management Plan developed for the project. North of Colton Boulevard full access for private accesses would be provided via a two-way left-turn lane.
Consistent with MDT Guidelines for Access Management	Not applicable because no access management proposed.	Consistent throughout corridor except between Zoo Drive and Hesper Road (intersection spacing is less than ½ mile at this location).
Safety		
Intersection Safety	Crash occurrences likely to increase with higher traffic volumes. Drivers are familiar with intersection operations.	Anticipated reduction in intersection-related crash rates with roundabouts; severity of crashes likely reduced due to slower speeds and no opposing traffic conflicts. Lack of initial driver familiarity with roundabouts.

Table 1. Summary of Estimated Potential Impacts (cont.)

Topic Area	No Build Alternative	Selected Alternative
Safety (cont.)		
Roadway Safety	Crash occurrences likely to increase with higher traffic volumes.	Anticipated reduction in roadway-related crash rates by controlling access, separation of opposing traffic, improving roadway condition, and improving clear zone.
Transit		
Existing Routes	No impact.	No impact.
Future Routes	Future transit service on or across Shiloh Road impeded by traffic congestion during peak periods.	Future transit service on or across Shiloh Road would benefit from improved traffic flow during peak periods.
Pedestrians and Bicycles		
Intersections	Lack of crosswalks, except at the Grand Avenue and Poly Drive intersections with Shiloh Road. However, even at the crosswalks pedestrian safety is not ensured (i.e. red-light running at signalized intersections, motorists failing to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, and right-turns-on-red at signalized intersections, etc.). Shorter crossing distances, except at Grand Avenue. No pedestrian signals exist within corridor except at the Grand Avenue intersection. For the safety of pedestrians with visual impairments and cognitive disabilities, benefits of visual cues, including signals and traffic stopping at intersection, and audible cues, related to traffic stopping at signals, exist at some intersections.	Crosswalks provided at roundabouts. However, even at the crosswalks pedestrian safety is not ensured (i.e. motorists failing to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, etc.). In general, total crossing distances are longer than under the No Build Alternative; however, pedestrian refuge areas enable pedestrians to consider one direction of traffic at a time. Drivers are required to yield to pedestrians. Because there are no signals, there is no designated crossing time. Safety benefits of visual cues, including signals and traffic stopping at intersection, and audible pedestrian cues, related to traffic stopping at signals, do not exist at roundabouts for pedestrians with visual impairments and cognitive disabilities.
Roadway Corridor	Discontinuous pedestrian/bicycle facilities and safety concerns would remain.	Sidewalks and multi-use paths provided along east and west sides of Shiloh Road from the entrance of ZooMontana to Poly Drive improve safety.
Consistency with Heritage Trail Plan	No opportunity to provide multi-use trail along Shiloh Road.	Implements multi-use trail along Shiloh Road. Not consistent with grade-separated crossing recommendations. However, at-grade crossing provided at proposed Monad Road bikeway and at proposed Hogan's Slough multi-use path (JTL/County access).
Community Resources		
Schools, Churches, Hospitals, and Parks and Recreational Facilities	Increasing difficulty to access due to traffic congestion.	Proposed improvements would benefit vehicular and pedestrian and bicycle access and safety while accessing these resources. Parking lot impacts would occur at three churches. Minor impacts to Sharptail Park and other small park areas. Clydesdale Park impacted by multi-use path.
Emergency Services	Decline of LOS could delay response time.	Improved LOS would improve response times over the No Build Alternative. Additional travel lanes would improve emergency vehicle passage.

Table 1. Summary of Estimated Potential Impacts (cont.)

Topic Area	No Build Alternative	Selected Alternative
Local and Regional Economics		
Economic Growth	Could slow future commercial development due to limited transportation infrastructure and traffic congestion.	Would accommodate the growth that is predicted in the City and County plans for the year 2027.
Overall Business Impacts	Adversely affected by increasing congestion.	Reduced congestion could benefit businesses along Shiloh Road.
Specific Business Impacts	Adversely affected by increasing congestion. No direct impacts.	Potential impacts to Cetrone Photo Studio (landscaping, signage, and parking), Shiloh Veterinary Clinic (landscaping and signage), Holiday Convenience/Gas Station (landscaping), Exxon Convenience/Gas Station (landscaping, signage, and parking), Yellowstone Bank (landscaping), Stockman Bank (landscaping), Shiloh North Shopping Center (landscaping, signage, and parking), and Sylvan Nursery (landscaping and signage).
Special Improvement District (SID)	No impact.	If a new SID is created to fund maintenance of new street lighting constructed as part of the project, the property owners within the SID boundaries would be assessed for the maintenance costs.
Estimated Project Construction Cost (in 2009 dollars)	$0.0	$24.4–$28.6 million
Land Use and Local Plans		
Land Use Change	No impact.	Adjacent agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential land would be converted to transportation uses within proposed ROW and/or easements.
Consistency with Land Use Plans	Inconsistent with land use plans except for the *Northwest Shiloh Area Plan*.	Consistent with *2003 Growth Policy Plan*, *West Billings Plan* and *Northwest Shiloh Area Plan*. Consistent with *West Billings Storm Drain Master Plan* with the following exception recommended by the City. The City intends to keep the storm water from Shiloh Road flowing in the existing closed conduit from Shiloh Road, running east on Grand Avenue until it reaches the Arnold Drain. Consistent with *Heritage Trail Plan* except for providing grade-separated crossings at Monad Road, Hogan's Slough, and Howard Avenue.
Right-of-Way (ROW) and Relocations		
ROW Acquisition and Multi-use Path Easement	No impact.	10.2 ha (25.1 ac) ROW and 0.85 ha (2.1 ac) easement for multi-use path.
Potential Structure Impacts	No impact.	1 commercial structure within ROW (Samurai Gardens Restaurant). 3 residential structures within ROW (2 townhomes and 1 single-family). 6 secondary structures, 3 within ROW (outbuildings associated with Shiloh Village Mobile Home Park) and 3 within construction limits (1 outbuilding, 1 pumphouse, and 1 barn structure).
Energy		
Fuel and Energy Consumption	Increased idling due to congestion would result in additional fuel consumption.	No traffic signals and the continuous traffic flow at roundabouts would result in less fuel and energy consumption than No Build Alternative.

Table 1. Summary of Estimated Potential Impacts (cont.)

Topic Area	No Build Alternative	Selected Alternative
Cultural / Archaeological / Historical Resources		
Cultural/Archaeological/ Historical Impacts	**No effect:** BBWA Canal, Bunkhouse, Big Ditch Canal, and Snow Ditch.	**No effect:** Bunkhouse and Big Ditch Canal. **No adverse effect:** BBWA Canal and Snow Ditch.
Noise		
Predicted Noise Level Increase (2002-2027)	3-6 dBA	3-10 dBA
Facilities at the Impacted Receptor Locations	16 single-family residences 5 planned or proposed developments 12 town home buildings 4 assisted-living buildings 5 apartment buildings 30 mobile home residences	22 single-family residences 5 planned or proposed developments 18 town home buildings 4 assisted-living buildings 5 apartment buildings 2 park areas 30 mobile home residences 1 church 1 college
Contaminated Sites / Hazardous Materials		
Hogan's Slough Bridge (treated timbers)	No impact.	Bridge materials would be salvaged or disposed of in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
Underground Storage Tanks (USTs)	No impact.	No impact.
Shiloh Drain	No impact.	Potential soil contamination from material in fill excavated for drain.
Removal of Structures or Excavation	No impact.	Potential soil contamination or asbestos containing materials (ACMs).
Farmlands		
Direct Impacts to Prime and Important Farmland	No impact.	2.97 ha (7.33 ac)
Irrigation		
Irrigation Systems	No impact.	Major irrigation canals including BBWA Canal, Big Ditch Canal, and Canyon Creek Ditch would be perpetuated. Some realignment, relocations, replacement of conveyance mechanisms and appurtenances, and ditch terminations could be required.
Visual Resources		
Visual Quality	No change, would continue to be low-to-moderate quality. Inconsistent treatment of road shoulders, powerlines, and utilities would remain.	Visual quality would be similar to current conditions (low-to-moderate). Organized and consistent treatment of road shoulders, powerlines, and utilities. Some mature vegetation would be removed. Potential for installation of noise abatement measures at specific locations, if any, to be determined during final design. Raised medians would provide additional opportunities for landscaping; unity and intactness. Roundabouts provide an additional opportunity for landscaping, and Rimrock views from roadway would not be impeded by traffic signals because roundabouts would replace existing traffic signals.

Table 1. Summary of Estimated Potential Impacts (cont.)

Topic Area	No Build Alternative	Selected Alternative
Floodplains		
Floodplains	No impact.	No encroachment into regulatory floodplain. No net change in hydrologic and hydraulic conditions and existing flooding potential at Hogan's Slough.
Water Resources and Quality		
Groundwater or Public Drinking Water Supply Wells	No impact.	No impact.
Storm Water Runoff	No impact.	Increase in impervious surface area would be negligible when compared to the total amount of impervious surfaces in the project vicinity. Contamination effects of the existing roadway have also already been realized. Therefore, effects of storm water runoff would be negligible.
Storm Water Management	No impact.	Potential utilization of Shiloh Drain to control flows at existing and proposed roadway crossings. Implementation of curb and gutter south of Hesper Road may require different collection system methods such as using adjacent vegetative area for filtration similar to the existing condition.
Water Body Modifications		
Crossings	No impact.	New bridge for multi-use path adjacent to existing BBWA Canal Bridge. BBWA Canal would be lined in concrete at new structure for maintenance purposes. Canyon Creek Ditch culvert, Hogan's Slough Bridge, and Snow Ditch culvert would be replaced.
Wetlands		
Approximate Jurisdictional Wetland Impacts	No impact.	1.0 ha (2.5 ac)
Non-Jurisdictional Wetland Impacts	No impact.	No impact.
Vegetation		
Montana Species of Concern	No impact.	No impact.
Vegetation	No impact.	Loss of approximately 4.5 ha (11.1 ac) of riparian habitat. Approximately 245 mature trees would be removed. Potential increase in noxious weeds because of disturbing ground cover.
Wildlife and Migratory Birds		
Montana Species of Concern	No impact.	No effect to western hognose snake. No effect to spiny softshell turtles. No effect to milk snakes.
Wildlife/Migratory Birds	No impact.	Minor potential impacts to wildlife and habitat, but unlikely to contribute to trends toward federal listing or loss of viability of any wildlife or bird species. Potential disturbance to migratory birds at Hogan's Slough during bridge removal, if nesting under bridge.

Table 1. Summary of Estimated Potential Impacts (cont.)

Topic Area	No Build Alternative	Selected Alternative
Aquatic Species		
Montana Species of Concern	No impact.	No impact.
Aquatic Species	No impact.	Minor potential impacts to aquatic species in Hogan's Slough and Canyon Creek from loss of riparian vegetation and increased storm water runoff (contaminants and increased water temperature).
Air Quality		
Carbon Monoxide	Increase in vehicle emissions including carbon monoxide at major intersections due to decreased LOS and increased congestion.	Decrease in vehicle emissions including carbon monoxide at major intersections due to improved LOS and decreased congestion would improve air quality at these intersections. Conforms to *Billings Urban Area 2005 Transportation Plan*; therefore, complies with Clean Air Act.
Section 4(f) Properties		
Section 4(f) Property Impacts	No impact.	BBWA Canal and Snow Ditch: Section 4(f) use of these sites. Bunkhouse and Big Ditch Canal: No Section 4(f) use of these sites.
Construction Impacts		
Impacts during Construction	No impact.	Temporary increased noise, mobile source air emissions, fugitive dust (dust in air), energy consumption, soil erosion, sedimentation; use of construction easements and staging areas; traffic delays; traffic congestion; potential for hazardous material spills; visual intrusions; and displacement of wildlife, migratory birds, and aquatic species. Disruption of pedestrian and bicycle access, residential and business accesses, parking, emergency response, irrigation systems, and utility connections. Short-term creation of direct and indirect jobs associated with construction.

4.2 Summary of Mitigation

Mitigation measures to minimize or reduce adverse transportation, community, and natural and physical environment impacts for the Selected Alternative are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Mitigation for the Selected Alternative

Resource Area	Type of Impact	Mitigation
Access		
Shiloh Road Access	Removal or relocation of property access to Shiloh Road. Out-of-direction travel due to installation of median and restricted turn movements.	Access closures and relocations will be coordinated with affected property owners during final design to minimize impacts to residences as well as agricultural and business operations. Additional median breaks and provisions for left-in turns will be assessed during final design to reduce out-of-direction travel resulting from the implementation of medians.

Table 2. Summary of Mitigation for the Selected Alternative (cont.)

Resource Area	Type of Impact	Mitigation
Safety		
Intersections	Potential initial driver confusion regarding modern roundabouts.	MDT will incorporate a public information program describing roundabouts and their operations that would include a Web site providing information to help the public understand how to maneuver through these circular flowing intersections. The site provides basic information regarding roundabouts, including why MDT wants to utilize roundabouts and how pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists can safely maneuver through them. MDT's public information program may also include informational brochures to be placed at the Airport, Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center, local businesses, and area hotels. These measures will help to improve drivers' understanding of modern roundabouts.
Pedestrians and Bicycles		
Intersections	Potential initial confusion regarding modern roundabouts.	See Safety.
Community Resources		
Property and Structures	Impacts to church and park property.	See Right-of-Way and Relocations for mitigation of impacts to property and structures.
Local and Regional Economics		
Property and Structures	Physical impacts to commercial property and structures.	See Right-of-Way and Relocations for mitigation of impacts to property and structures.
Right-of-Way and Relocations		
Right-of-Way	ROW requirements.	Where appropriate, MDT will minimize or avoid impacts through final design modifications including, but not limited to, reconfiguring accesses, steepening side slopes, reducing boulevard widths, or constructing retaining walls; or minimizing ROW acquisition.
Property Acquisition	ROW acquisition and relocations/acquisitions of residences and commercial businesses.	Acquisition of land, and improvements, for highway construction is governed by state and federal laws and regulations that are designed to protect both the landowners and the taxpaying public. Landowners affected are entitled to receive just compensation for land or improvements acquired and for depreciation in value of the remaining land due to the effects of highway construction pursuant to Montana law. Acquisition will be accomplished in accordance with applicable laws; specifically, Title 60, Chapter 4 and Title 70, Chapter 30, Montana Code Annotated; and Title 42, USC, Chapter 61, "Uniform Relocation Assistance And Real Property Acquisition Policies For Federal And Federally Assisted Programs."
Utilities		
Relocations	Relocation of utilities.	In accordance with MDT Standard Specifications, utility companies will be contacted to coordinate activities to avoid or minimize disruption to service. According to Montana statute, as applicable, MDT will pay a portion of any required utility relocations.
Cultural/Archaeological/Historical Resources		
BBWA Canal	Potential impacts to canal from construction of new multi-use path over canal.	To minimize impacts: • No piers for the new multi-use path bridge will be located in the BBWA Canal. • On the Shiloh Road bridge and corresponding approaches, as appropriate, reduce the boulevard width separating the sidewalk from the roadway to approximately 0.6 m (2 ft).

Table 2. Summary of Mitigation for the Selected Alternative (cont.)

Resource Area	Type of Impact	Mitigation
Cultural/Archaeological/Historical Resources (cont.)		
Bunkhouse	Potential impacts to site from construction of roundabout and sidewalk.	To avoid the site: • Construct an approximately 0.3-m (1-ft) high retaining wall between the back of sidewalk and southwest corner of site. The retaining wall would be located in the northeast corner of the roundabout and would be approximately 7.6 m (25 ft) long. • Eliminate the boulevard width (1.5 m [5 ft]) that is proposed to separate the sidewalk and the roadway. • Narrow the sidewalk while meeting the minimum ADA requirement of 0.9 m (3 ft) at the southwest corner of the Bunkhouse site (the sidewalk will resume the proposed 2.1 m [7 ft] width on both sides of this section where it is adjacent to the curb). • Shift the Broadwater Avenue roundabout to the west approximately 2.5 m (8.2 ft) and south approximately 4.6 m (15.1 ft). See Appendix A in the EA for the location of the Bunkhouse and Figure 2.20 in the EA for the location of the Broadwater Avenue roundabout. • Reduce the ROW requirement from 3 m (10 ft) beyond the construction limits to approximately 0.3 m (1 ft) beyond the outside edge of sidewalk and near the edge of the retaining wall at the southwest corner of the Bunkhouse site.
Snow Ditch	Potential impacts from replacing existing culvert, installation of new culvert, and placement of guardrail.	To minimize impacts: • Replace the standard 6-to-1 (horizontal to vertical) side slope with a steeper side slope where the ditch is not in culvert in order to keep the ditch open and minimize impacts related to grading. This will require the steepening of side slopes for approximately 275 m (902 ft). The installation of guardrail may be required as a safety measure along sections with steepened slopes.
Noise		
Receptors	19 to 27 Category B receptors would meet or exceed MDT noise impact criteria.	During final design, barrier construction will be reassessed to identify specific locations at which noise mitigation may be feasible and reasonable. To minimize traffic noise impacts at planned or proposed developments within the project area, noise-compatible land uses and/or noise mitigation measures will need to be incorporated into the future development. MDT will provide the Revision 1 Shiloh Road Corridor Study, Traffic Noise Study to the City and County Planning Department for their consideration in land use planning and reviewing development proposals.
Contaminated Sites/Hazardous Materials		
Hogan's Slough Bridge	Removal of treated timber bridge.	Hogan's Slough bridge materials will be salvaged or disposed of in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
Underground Storage Tanks and Solid Waste and Soil Contamination	Potential impacts to underground storage tanks at one gas station and potential removal of fill originally excavated for the Shiloh Drain and relocation of structures and/or excavation in proximity to current or former residences and farmsteads.	In accordance with MDT Standard Specifications, if contaminated soils or hazardous materials are encountered, excavation and disposal will be handled in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Table 2. Summary of Mitigation for the Selected Alternative (cont.)

Resource Area	Type of Impact	Mitigation
Contaminated Sites/Hazardous Materials (cont.)		
Asbestos	Potential asbestos present in three potentially impacted structures.	Structures identified for relocation or demolition will be inspected for asbestos. If regulated asbestos containing material is found, the materials will be removed according to state and federal regulations.
Irrigation		
Irrigation Systems	Relocation of impacted canals and ditches.	Canals and ditches will be relocated as necessary in consultation with owners to minimize impacts. As appropriate, removal of ditches will be done during construction of new roadway and will include removal of concrete headgates, pipes, and structures. New facilities will be located outside proposed project ROW.
BBWA Canal	Construction of new multi-use path over BBWA Canal.	For canal maintenance purposes, canal will be lined with concrete underneath the proposed bridge for the multi-use path and approximately 3 m (10 ft) upstream and downstream of the bridge. (See Cultural/Archaeological/Historic Resources for additional mitigation).
Snow Ditch	Replacement of culvert and installation of new culvert.	See Cultural/Archaeological/Historic Resources for mitigation.
Visual Resources		
Visual Quality	Potential implementation of noise abatement measures at specific locations.	A final decision on the installation of the noise abatement measures will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the associated public involvement process with the affected landowners. Aesthetic issues, if any, will be considered as part of this process in final design.
Water Resources/Quality		
Storm Water Runoff	Roadway surface water runoff collection.	The Preferred Alternative has been designed to minimize water quality impacts and will be in compliance with applicable permits and authorizations including Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404, Montana Stream Protection Act (SPA 124), and the General Permits for Storm Water Discharge Associated with Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). A paved shoulder section will be considered during final design instead of curb and gutter south of the BBWA Bridge (approximately 85 m [280 ft] south of the Hesper Road intersection) to eliminate the need for a storm water collection system for that segment of the corridor. These mitigation measures will not be applicable between Hesper Road and the BBWA Bridge due to the roundabout design.
Groundwater Wells	Potential impacts to groundwater wells if discovered during final design or construction.	Relocation of impacted wells in accordance with FHWA's and MDT's standard procedures.
Water Body Modifications		
Water Bodies	Alteration of water bodies from construction of new bridges and culverts.	Structures will be designed to minimize disruption of hydrology or permanent alterations of banks and in compliance with applicable permits and authorizations including CWA Section 404 and SPA 124. Clearing of riparian areas will be done in accordance with mitigation measures described in Vegetation. Specific mitigation measures for the BBWA Canal and Snow Ditch are described in Cultural/Archaeological/Historic Resources.

Table 2. Summary of Mitigation for the Selected Alternative (cont.)

Resource Area	Type of Impact	Mitigation
Wetlands		
Wetlands	Filling of wetlands and hydrologic modifications.	MDT's standard practice in regard to jurisdictional wetland impacts is to: 1. Avoid potential adverse impacts to the maximum extent practicable. 2. Minimize unavoidable adverse impacts to the extent appropriate and practicable. 3. Compensate for unavoidable adverse impacts that remain after all appropriate and practicable minimization has occurred. Estimated wetland impacts included in this EA are based on conceptual design and are subject to COE review. Adverse wetland impacts have been avoided and minimized as much as practicable and as much as can be determined in the conceptual design phase. Avoidance and minimization measures to date include designing reconstruction of Shiloh Road to generally include widening of the road using the existing centerline, holding the grade as low as practicable, and steepening fill slopes where practicable and where safety would not be compromised. Avoidance and minimization measures will continue to be employed where practicable throughout design and construction. Mitigation for unavoidable adverse impacts to jurisdictional wetlands will be coordinated with the COE and other resource agencies as required for permitting. If offsite mitigation is required, wetland impacts will likely be mitigated at an established MDT Wetland Reserve in Watershed #13 (Upper Yellowstone). Those reserves currently include the Stillwater River and Wagner Pit Sites. Additional sites are currently being developed.
Vegetation		
Vegetation	Small loss of riparian vegetation from replacement of bridges and culverts and reconstruction of roadway. Removal of mature trees.	In accordance with MDT Standard Specifications, clearing and grubbing will be limited to the area necessary for construction of the project. As a result of ROW negotiations and agreements with individual property owners, trees may be replaced. Mitigation for noxious weeds is described in Construction Impacts.
Wildlife and Migratory Birds		
Migratory Birds	Potential impact to migratory birds from removal of bridge potentially used for nesting.	Mitigation measures described under the Water Resources/Quality section will minimize impacts to wildlife and migratory bird habitat. The Hogan's Slough Bridge will be rechecked for nesting activity closer to the start of construction. If the bridge is to be removed during the migratory bird nesting period, inactive nests will be removed prior to the nesting period and efforts will be undertaken to ensure that new nests are not established prior to removal of the old structure. If active nests are reestablished or exist on the structure, on or between May 1 and August 15 (the nesting period), the structure or nests will not be removed until the MDT project manager, in coordination with MDT Environmental Services, provides approval.
Aquatic Species		
Fisheries	Potential impacts to fish passage at Hogan's Slough.	The structure at Hogan's Slough will be designed for fish passage. The proper placement of the structure will be determined by means of engineering analysis to address the required hydraulic functions.

Table 2. Summary of Mitigation for the Selected Alternative (cont.)

Resource Area	Type of Impact	Mitigation
Section 4(f) Properties		
BBWA Canal	Section 4(f) use of this site.	No piers for the new multi-use path bridge will be located in the BBWA Canal. The overall width of the proposed improvements will be reduced at this location so that the existing roadway bridge would not need replacement with a wider bridge. The width of the boulevard will be reduced to approximately 0.6 m (2 ft). At the crossing of the BBWA Canal, maintaining the roadway on the existing alignment minimizes impacts to the BBWA Canal because the impact is occurring at an existing disturbed area of the canal. If the crossing were to occur on a new alignment, a previously undisturbed area of the canal would be impacted and greater rechanneling of the canal may be needed, resulting in a greater impact.
Snow Ditch	Section 4(f) use of this site.	The standard (horizontal to vertical) side slope will be replaced with a steeper side slope where the ditch is not in a culvert in order to keep the ditch open and minimize impacts related to grading. The installation of guardrail may also be required as a safety measure along all sections with steepened side slopes. At the crossing of the Snow Ditch, maintaining the roadway on the existing alignment minimizes impacts to Snow Ditch because the impact is occurring at an existing disturbed area of the ditch. If the crossing were to occur on a new alignment, a previously undisturbed area of the ditch would be impacted, resulting in a greater impact. MDT ROW will be minimized in this location.
Construction Impacts		
Traffic	Disruption of traffic during roadway construction.	A construction traffic control plan will be developed according to MDT Standard Specifications to include construction phasing devised to maintain two lanes of traffic and uninterrupted side road access along the corridor to the greatest extent practicable. The contractor will coordinate with emergency service providers and schools to solicit input for the construction traffic control plan and to provide ongoing information during construction.
Access	Temporary access impacts.	Early notification and coordination with affected adjacent property owners.
Pedestrians and Bicycles	Disruption of pedestrian and bicycle movements.	Mitigation for construction impacts will include maintenance of walkways and pavement to the extent practicable and providing additional pedestrian signage during construction. The construction traffic control plan will include providing protection, safety, and convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists.
Community Resources	Emergency service and school bus routes could be impacted by lane closures and traffic congestion during construction.	Coordination with emergency services and school districts will be undertaken prior to construction and will be included as part of the construction traffic control plan.
Local and Regional Economics	Temporary access and construction areas are needed.	Early notification of affected property owners regarding construction activities. During construction, travel delays will be minimized to the extent practicable.

Table 2. Summary of Mitigation for the Selected Alternative (cont.)

Resource Area	Type of Impact	Mitigation
Construction Impacts (cont.)		
Right-of-Way and Relocations	Construction easements would be needed from property owners along the corridor. While the property owners would retain ownership of these areas, their use of these areas during construction would be restricted by particular construction activities. Upon completion of the roadway project, the property owners would have unrestricted use of these areas again.	Early notification of affected property owners, on a property-by-property basis, of construction activities in order to address potential construction impacts. Easements will be obtained in accordance with applicable laws; specifically, Title 60, Chapter 4 and Title 70, Chapter 30, Montana Code Annotated; and Title 42, USC, Chapter 61, "Uniform Relocation Assistance And Real Property Acquisition Policies For Federal And Federally Assisted Programs."
Cultural/ Archaeological/ Historical Resources	Ground disturbing activities may unexpectedly uncover cultural materials.	In accordance with MDT Standard Specifications, if cultural material is unexpectedly encountered during ground-disturbing activities in the corridor, construction will cease immediately, and a qualified archeologist will be consulted to evaluate the significance of the cultural artifacts.
Noise	Construction activities would result in temporary increases in noise levels.	To minimize construction noise impacts on the local residents, contractors are required to adhere to local ordinances and BMPs to minimize noise impacts during construction. Contractors will be required to acquire a permit from the City to perform work during night time hours. Permit conditions limit certain activities during these hours to minimize noise impacts. Advance notice of construction will be provided to area businesses and residences to minimize impacts on community activities.
Contaminated Sites/Hazardous Materials	Potential disturbance of contaminated soils within MDT ROW and easements.	If contaminated soils/sites are disturbed during construction, they will be addressed in accordance with MDT Standard Specifications and applicable federal regulations.
Irrigation	Irrigation facilities may be temporarily impacted.	Early coordination with affected irrigation ditch companies and owners to address potential impacts to irrigation activities during roadway reconstruction and irrigation ditch relocations. Reasonable measures will be taken to avoid disruption of irrigation activities during construction, such as scheduling interruptions to a facility when it is not being used (typically mid-October through mid-May).
Visual Resources	Temporary impacts related to removal of vegetation and dust emissions.	Mitigation measures identified for Vegetation and Air Quality will reduce the visual impacts from construction.
Water Resources/ Quality	Short-term impacts from increased storm water runoff, erosion, construction staging activities, spilled fuels, or other hazardous materials.	An erosion control and sediment plan will be prepared and maintained in compliance with Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 402 / Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) regulations. The contractor will be expected to comply with applicable permits and authorizations including CWA Section 404, SPA 124, and MS4. The contractor will also be expected to adhere to MDT BMPs and the recommended BMPs as applicable in the MS4 for erosion and sediment control. To reduce the spread and establishment of noxious weeds and re-establish permanent vegetation, disturbed areas within MDT ROW or easements will be seeded with desirable plant species, as recommended by the MDT Botanist. Revegetation will be conducted in accordance with MDT Standard Specifications. Following construction, noxious weeds will be controlled by MDT, County Weed Board, or the City depending on final permitting.

Table 2. Summary of Mitigation for the Selected Alternative (cont.)

Resource Area	Type of Impact	Mitigation
Construction Impacts (cont.)		
Water Body Modifications	Temporary disturbance of water bodies during bridge and culvert removal or construction.	An erosion control and sediment plan will be prepared and maintained in compliance with CWA Section 402 / MPDES regulations. The contractor will be expected to comply with applicable permits and authorizations including CWA Section 404, SPA 124, and MS4. The contractor will also be expected to adhere to MDT BMPs and the recommended BMPs as applicable in the MS4 for erosion and sediment control.
Wetlands	Temporary physical disturbance to wetlands during construction from bridge and culvert replacement and roadway construction activities; disturbance could include sedimentation, erosion, increase in non-native plant species, and introduction of pollutants into wetlands.	Mitigation measures described under the Water Resources/Quality section will minimize impacts to wetlands.
Vegetation	The spread and establishment of noxious weeds during construction.	To reduce the spread and establishment of noxious weeds and to re-establish permanent vegetation, disturbed areas within MDT ROW and easements will be seeded with desirable plant species, as recommended by the MDT Botanist. Revegetation will be conducted in accordance with MDT Standard Specifications. Following construction, noxious weeds will be controlled by MDT, County Weed Board, or the City depending on final permitting. An erosion control and sediment control plan will be prepared in compliance with Section 402/ MPDES regulations.
Wildlife and Migratory Birds	Potential impacts to wildlife and migratory birds from water quality degradation from work in and near water bodies in the area. Potential impacts to bats during construction activities at Hogan's Slough.	Mitigation measures described under the Water Resources/Quality section will minimize impacts to wildlife and migratory bird habitat. The Hogan's Slough Bridge will be rechecked for potential bat activity closer to the start of construction. If bats are found on the Hogan Slough Bridge, MDT will contact the MFWP Native Species Specialists for further input.
Aquatic Species	Short-term impacts to aquatic species due to in-stream work.	Mitigation measures described under the Water Resources/Quality section will minimize impacts to aquatic species habitat.
Air Quality	Short-term increases in fugitive dust and mobile source emissions.	Fugitive dust and mobile source emissions will be minimized via adherence to MDT Standard Specifications, which will limit clearing and grubbing; specify re-seeding procedures; require use of water or chemical dust suppressant; require that contractors operate in compliance with air quality standards established by federal, state, and local agencies; and require the development of a construction traffic control plan, which will minimize disruption of traffic and associated engine idle time.

5.0 Selection of Preferred Alternative

MDT proposes to reconstruct an approximately 7.2 kilometer (km) (4.5 mile [mi]) section of Shiloh Road between Canyon Creek and Poly Drive on the western edge of the City of Billings in Yellowstone County, Montana. Based on the Shiloh Road Corridor EA and the summary of public and agency comments and responses, FHWA has selected the

Preferred Alternative, which is described in the attached EA (refer to pages 2-23 through 2-26 in Appendix C). Elements of the Preferred Alternative include a corridor typical section (including pedestrian and bicycle elements); design treatments; access management plan; and intersection control. Modern roundabouts were selected for this corridor and will be constructed at Zoo Drive, Hesper Road, the JTL/County shared access, King Avenue, Monad Road, Central Avenue, Broadwater Avenue, and Grand Avenue.

The Preferred Alternative achieves the purpose and need for this project as described in the attached EA.

The Code of Federal Regulations, 23 CFR 771.119 (i), states; "If, at any point in the EA process, the Administration determines that the action is likely to have a significant impact on the environment, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be required." No significant impacts were identified due to the proposed project, and therefore, the Preferred Alternative was selected for this project. The impacts of both the Selected Alternative and No Build Alternative are summarized in Table 1 of this document.

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Appendix A

Public Hearing Transcript

Public Hearing Sign-In Sheets

Comments Received During the Public Comment Period and MDT's Responses

FORMAL PUBLIC HEARING

STPU 1031(2) CN 4666

Shiloh Road Corridor

An open house, presentation, and formal public hearing for the Shiloh Road Corridor project were held on February 6, 2007 at Faith Evangelical Church beginning at 6:30 pm. The presentation and public hearing were recorded by a stenographer and are transcribed below.

Transcription

IN THE MATTER OF:

PUBLIC HEARING

Shiloh Road Proposal

TRANSCRIPT OF

PROCEEDINGS

February 6, 2007

REPORTED BY: VIRGINIA LEYENDECKER. Certified Shorthand Reporter, (NJ License No. 1701) and Notary Public, on the above date, commencing at 6:30 p.m., at the Faith Evangelical Church, Sweetwater Drive, Billings, Montana.

MR. LYNCH: I would like to welcome you to the public hearing for Shiloh Road. I'm Jim Lynch. I'm the Director of the Montana Department of Transportation.

I try to do this as much as I can, public hearings. I've been to Billings a couple of times on some issues up in the Heights, and then, of course, on Shiloh and other areas within the state. I think it's important that I get out of Helena as much as I can and visit with people of the state, particularly on the roads and corridors, so that I can get an understanding of what they think should be going on within their state.

It's a pleasure to be back in Billings. I almost didn't make it. It was a great flight all the way to about 35 miles west of Billings. Then the clouds formed in, and, of course, we got reports that the airport was below minimum. So I turned south and headed to Columbus and tried to think, "Okay, how long will it take for somebody to pick me up in Columbus and get here?"

Just as I got about to Columbus, we heard an airplane got the strobes at minimum. So I had to turn and head back to Billings. We got to Billings and actually got the strobe at 250

feet above minimum, so I was able to land, which is nice, because I wouldn't want to miss this evening.

What we have got going here is the Shiloh Road. You know, we have had three public hearings. We have gotten an awful lot of input from the members of the community as well as city council, county commissioners, planning board and whatnot, trying to come up with what we call in the NEPA process a preferred alternative.

What that means is we have incorporated all the comments and we have come up with what we think the community wants for Shiloh. Does that mean that's what everybody wants? No. It's what we think the majority of the consensus wants.

We will take some time here to explain that. We will have people from the department and also from the engineering companies to explain what the corridor looks like. There will be an opportunity for you to ask questions for clarification, and then, after that, the public hearing starts.

When that starts, we are here to listen. We don't communicate. We are here to listen to you and to hear what your comments are, based on what we have been able to compile over the past three or four public hearings and meetings and what not.

This is your time to get up here. All the public hearings I go to I insist that we will stay here however long it takes to make sure that anybody who wants to comment has an opportunity to comment, so you will be given an opportunity.

If some of you are uncomfortable with a microphone in your hand and trying to make a comment and explain your position, you can do a written comment. Those written comments -- we will take those up until February 12th. Then we will compile all the comments that were made, answer the comments that were made or address the comments that were made, and then come back to this community with what -- based on this public hearing, you know, do we have a roadway or do we have to make some changes?

That is kind of what tonight will be. You will hear that from people who are presenting. I think it's good because we kind of need to keep reassuring ourselves.

Again, I want everybody to understand you will be given an opportunity to comment. I hope no one has to take 30 minutes, but if what you have to say is important in 30 minutes, we will listen. But you know, we have an awful lot of people here. The way the comment process works, it isn't so much quantity as it is quality of the comments. So if someone -- two or three people have said the same thing, you don't have to repeat it. You can get up and say, "It's already been mentioned, these are the issues I have," and you can shorten it. If you feel you don't want to do that, you tell us what you want to say as far as your comment goes.

I would like to introduce some people from the Department of Transportation and the team that put this together, as well as some of your local officials so you know who is here. From Engineering, Inc., who is the engineering company the Department of Transportation hired to develop this process and to do this EA, is Michael Sanderson.

When I call you please stand up so they can see you. Does that sound good?

Michael? There he is back there. Kirk Spalding; Steve Heidner. Is Steve here? Oh, he's out front. Steve met you when you came in. D.J. Clark. D.J. is in the back raising his hand;

and Troy Kelsey (ph). There is Troy. From David Evans and Associates, which is another engineering firm on this project, we have Deb Perkins-Smith and Chad Ricklefs. From the Department of Transportation out of Helena, we have Fred Bente, who has been on the project from the very beginning. We have Tom Hansen. There he is. And Paul Grant. He will be presenting after I talk. Paul is out of the director's office and he handles public hearings throughout the state.

From MDT here in Billings, of course, there is our division administrator, Bruce Barrett. There he is in the back. And Dave Swanson, there you are. Hi, Dave. From Yellowstone County, we have Bob -- I think it's -- I hope I'm not pronouncing this wrong -- Moats, right? Did I say that right? He is director of public works. We have Mike Black who is also with public works; Jim Reno, county commissioner; John Ostlund, county commissioner; and Bill Kennedy, county commissioner.

For the city/county planning board, Doug Clark; from Federal Highways is Carl James. They only sent one. They must have faith in the operation.

From the City of Billings, we have Debi Meling. I hope I didn't mispronounce your name. Debi is from the engineering department, the engineering manager; Dick Clark from the city council. There he is. Chris Veis from city council. Is it Veis? I'm sorry. Where is Chris? There he is. Chris is in the back keeping track of everybody, right?

We have Tina Voleck (sic) (Volek) from the city administration. Hi, Tina. And Darlene Tussing, who is the alternate roads coordinator. Is that everybody? No? Nancy Boyer.

So we have a pretty good representation both from your city and county and different planning offices, which I think is very important.

At this time, what I would like to do is -- I think we kind of understand what is going on. I think I covered most of it. Paul Grant from the Department of Transportation will cover it a little bit more.

But, again, I want to encourage you, if you have something to say, please do it now. We certainly aren't going to cut you off. The important thing is we take comments tonight. I will be here as long as you are here.

So, again, welcome to this meeting for the Shiloh Road. I would like to thank the church for allowing the venue for this opportunity. This is a great place to hold a public hearing and we appreciate it.

I would like to introduce you to Paul Grant. He's out of the director's office and deals with public policy projects. He will start the show from here.

MR. GRANT: Thank you, Jim. As Director Lynch had indicated, I'm Paul Grant. I'm the public involvement coordinator for Montana Department of Transportation, and I will be facilitating the meeting tonight.

Like I said, we want this to be a very informative meeting. I'm going to be the one who is kind of keeping everything on track.

I would like to take the opportunity, first off, to welcome you here tonight to share your comments with us. We are very interested in what you have to say. This is a public hearing for the environmental assessment for Shiloh Road corridor in Yellowstone County. We have a lot of housekeeping details to go through so you have an idea of what to expect tonight.

We are here tonight for many reasons. The first reason is to briefly summarize the preferred alternative in the Shiloh Road corridor environmental assessment, also known as the EA. I'll be referring to the assessments as the EA.

For a lot of these meetings, I'm the person who is always saying, "Don't use acronyms, always say it as it's supposed be." Well, I'm going to change the rule tonight, since I'm talking, and I'm going to call it the EA, to make sure we go through things a lot quicker.

We are here to explain the elements of the preferred alternative and potential impacts of that preferred alternative. Then finally, we are here to get your public comment, because the way we deliver a project from Montana Department of Transportation is to meet the needs of the community. The only way we can do that is to hear what is going to work for you.

So here are some of the housekeeping rules. There are sign-in sheets at the entrance as you come in. We request everyone to sign up so we have it on public record who was here. There is also water, coffee and cookies in the foyer. If you need to get up and stretch, go ahead and help yourself to that.

I will mention again the locations of where the EA document currently is available for public review, in case you wanted to review it before the end of the comment period on February 12th. The locations are at the Montana Department of Transportation, the Billings office at 424 Morey Street; the City of Billings Planning and Community Services Department at 510 North Broadway; Montana State University Billings Library, 1500 University Drive; and at the Will James Middle School, at 1200 30th Street West.

Tonight's agenda will be in three parts. It's as follows: First we are going to summarize the EA. The presenters for this portion of the meeting who have already been introduced will be the consulting team from David Evans and Associates, Inc. and Engineering Inc.

Secondly, after the presenters have given you information regarding the EA, we will move into what we call the environmental assessment clarification portion of the program where you, the public, will have the opportunity to ask specific questions about the environmental assessment document to the consulting team.

Please keep in mind this is the time for questions only, no comments. That will come later. What will happen is you will come up to the microphone and you can ask the consulting team questions about the EA and the information that they have spoken to tonight.

Thirdly, after the EA clarification period, then we will move -- we will open things up for the formal hearing. Please remember this portion of the hearing is the formal process of collecting comments and testimony. This is not going to be the question-and-answer period. It's the opportunity for you to let us know what you think about what is in the environmental assessment document, how it affects you.

If you haven't had an opportunity to review the assessment document or you're not prepared to give comments tonight, the comment period is open until February 12th. You can submit your comments in writing and leave them in the box in the foyer or you can take the comment sheets home and submit your comments by mail, or you can also submit your comments on the using the website address, which is also located -- or indicated on the documents comment sheets out in the foyer.

If you have any other questions regarding how to submit the comment sheets, you can get a hold of me after the meeting.

Public inquiry received by February 12th will be considered by the Montana Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration. Based on the public comments received, the proposed improvements and mitigation presented in the EA document may be refined in the decision document.

If significant impacts are identified, Montana Department of Transportation would need to prepare an EIS, which is an environmental impact statement, in order to proceed with this project. If no significant impacts are identified at this time, a FONSI, which is the finding of no significant impact, will be completed and signed by the Federal Highway Administration. The public will be notified of the final decision document, the final design and right-of-way acquisition.

Just to reiterate one more time: We will have three presenters, who will make up the consulting team, give their presentation. We will have an EA classification session where you can present your questions regarding the EA document to the team. Finally, we will have the formal hearing section where you can give your comments about the environmental assessment document. Again, no questions will be answered during this section of the hearing. Montana Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration are just -- at that time will be here just to hear your comments.

At this point, I would like to turn the microphone over to the first presenter, Debra Perkins-Smith from David Evans and Associates, Inc.

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: Thank you, Paul. My name is Debra Perkins-Smith. I've seen a number of you from the past public meetings.

I'm going to talk briefly about what is called a National Environmental Policy Act. We refer to that as NEPA. That is the process we're in now. That is required for all projects where there is a federal action.

In the case of Shiloh Road, that action is federal funding. So we are required to go through the process because we are having federal funding on the project.

We are getting towards the end of that process, just to let you know. The first few steps of that process included developing the purpose and need which, if you look on your handout tonight, there is something that says, Project Purpose. That was developed early on in the project.

It's called, The purpose of this project is to improve mobility and safety in the Shiloh Road corridor by increasing roadway capacity and providing bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvement. That purpose is the gauge against which all alternatives have been evaluated. We must fulfill that purpose to carry on with the project.

The second step that we took in the process was to come to you in a public meeting and scope the issues, identify what the issues are and potential alternatives.

The next step was to actually take that information and develop the alternatives as a project team.

The step after that was to evaluate the alternatives and identify a preferred alternative. That is what Kirk is going to talk to you about in a minute; specifically, the preferred alternative.

After that evaluation was completed, we put together the documentation on this process, which Paul talked about, which is the environmental assessment.

For your information, there are two copies here tonight. They are in a chair, sitting over there right next to the summary of the environmental evaluation. So if you want to take a look at those tonight, they are here in the room.

The step that we are in now is the comment period, as Paul talked about. You can provide comments until February 12th.

What happens after that is we will assess those comments as a project team and respond to those comments either in the FONSI or EIS. That would complete the NEPA, or the environmental process, for this project.

Throughout the project, as part of the NEPA process, we have had a lot of public involvement; we've had three public meetings, a number of newsletters, interested parties meetings, stakeholders meetings. We had a project advisory committee. That committee was made up of city and county officials and staff. We held 10 meetings. Their role was to guide and advise the project team through this project. So we have had a lot of interaction with the project advisory team.

The preferred alternative, that Kirk is going to talk about tonight as is presented in the environmental assessment, is consistent with the guidance provided by the project advisory committee and supported by the city and county.

With that, I will have Kirk talk about the specific elements within the preferred alternative.

MR. SPALDING: As many of you know if you have been following the project, we do have a preferred alternative in the environmental assessment. It does consist of seven roundabout intersections at the major arterials and one additional roundabout at the JTL group access. The typical section for the roadway corridor is what you may typically see in an urban setting with curb and gutter features to accommodate drainage. In our case, we have a raised median proposed for the majority of the corridor to separate the opposing travel lanes. We do have, typically, two lanes in each direction.

As I said, we had curb and gutter to take care of the storm drainage. Most of that will be conveyed to the Shiloh Drain and the Hogan Slough. We may have to look at some retainage in the Shiloh Drain feature itself.

We do have paved shoulders south of Hesper due to the absence of curb and gutter, basically, because we want to be careful where the storm water goes and not convey it to point-discharge locations. We do propose lighting along the corridor. When we have a raised median and curb and gutter, we like to have that lit and are required to have it lit when a raised median is present.

We are proposing a five-foot minimum boulevard width between the back of the curb and the sidewalk or the multi-use path. The multi-use path is a 10-foot pathway. At this point, it looks like it will be asphalt going the entire length from Zoo Montana all the way up to Poly.

On the other side of the road will be a sidewalk, a five-foot-wide sidewalk, approximately. The landscaping is a bit of an unknown at this point in terms of what degree we will do landscaping. Hopefully, we will have landscaping in the wide median sections.

As we go along the corridor, starting at the north end of Poly Drive to, essentially, Zoo Drive, we are looking at two travel lanes in each direction. The short segment up at the north end near Poly, between Poly and Colton, we would do a two-way left-turn lane, which is a flush median, so that people can have access to the residential homes up there.

From Zoo Drive to Zoo Montana -- so it's a short reach. Basically, we will be transitioning down to a smaller section from the larger four-lane section with a left turn provided at Pierce Parkway. Then from the Pierce Parkway-slash-Zoo Montana access down to the south end of the project, we're just going to transition down to the existing footprint and do an overlay project for that.

As I mentioned, the preferred alternative for the major intersections is a roundabout. I think many of you have followed the roundabouts and done your own research on the roundabouts. In every roundabout of the eight that we are proposing in the preferred alternative, there are two northbound and two southbound travel lanes that go through, which is consistent with the footprint on either side of the intersections.

On the side streets, it varies from one to two entry lanes on each approach. So that is kind of the general idea of how the roundabouts are along Shiloh Road.

People are asking why we selected the roundabouts. They have astronomical safety benefits that have been noted and studied. There are all kinds of studies that have been conducted out there to demonstrate that there is reduced accident frequency and severity compared to signalized intersections.

The roundabouts, as proposed for Shiloh Road, have a higher level of service. Level of service is a measure of efficiency of intersections, typically rated from A, which is best, to F, which is worst. As they are proposed and designed currently in the preferred alternative, they would provide level of service B or C. We are required to provide level of service C in any design for these federal aid projects at intersections, so we meet that purpose and that need there.

There is a misconception about right-of-way. People are thinking the right-of-way impacts are much more with the roundabouts when, in fact, they are not. They are, in some cases, right at the intersection, but what we find is the signalized intersections have a much larger footprint due to all the improvements that are required on the side streets and the auxiliary lanes -- the left-turn lanes and the right-turn lanes. The roundabouts only have two entering and two exiting lanes, worst case. So there actually is less right-of-way impact.

Pedestrian facilities. As I mentioned before, we will have the multi-use path on one side of the roadway, a 10-foot-wide asphalt path most likely. The sidewalks would be a five-foot sidewalk, continuous along the reach and adjacent to the roadway. The distance from the roadway to the walkways would be variable, based on conditions and right-of-way and those kinds of things as we go along.

The roundabouts provide for marked crosswalks just like you would see at most intersections. Signalized intersections often have pedestrian signals for a protected movement. The roundabouts don't have that designated movement, but the crosswalk is typically set back a ways from the intersection and, in Montana, motorists are required to yield to pedestrians at marked crosswalks.

That being said, pedestrians, as they negotiate across the approaches, will see, since there's a raised median, there is actually a refuge area in the middle of the roadway. They actually negotiate half the roadway at a time, looking to their left or right just one at a time.

As they get -- for instance, I know it's hard for you to see back there, but if you were on the south approach of an intersection, you would cross the first two travel lanes after first looking to your left only. That's the only direction you need to look. You would cross to the center median as a refuge, and then you would look to your right for the exiting vehicles from the roundabout. Then, after an acceptable gap, negotiate the rest, or if motorists yield.

The access management plan. We actually will have a formal access management plan in the end of this project where we will depict where the accesses will be and to what configuration. Further, it will provide for future access provisions based upon the spacing criteria we establish for the project. There are two separate types of classifications for access management that we are following along the corridor. From Grand to the north end of the project falls under the developed category because the access facing is much more dense. So there is less stringent requirements and benefits gained from restricting accesses in that reach.

So we have a plan to basically propose full access for a good chunk of the accesses right there along the public streets, with strict accesses to many of the private accesses. As I mentioned, the two-way left-turn lanes provide full access along the northern end of the project for those residential dwellings.

The developed portion, from Grand to Poly -- or rather the intermediate portion, from Canyon Creek to Grand Avenue, is a different set of criteria, where we really are trying to restrict the accesses along the corridor to promote through mobility, and at the same time enhance the safety benefits that can be realized from restricting access.

In those areas, we actually have a much more stringent access management plan proposed for the alternatives. There is a lot of right-in and right-out access for the majority of accesses. As I said, there is eight full access intersections via roundabouts between Grand and Canyon Creek, and then we have a few locations where we actually proposed a three-quarter access. What that does is that's a right-in and right-out from the side street that restricts the side street access from doing a left turn onto Shiloh. It allows for a left turn off of Shiloh, but not a left turn onto Shiloh, if that makes sense.

We'll have kind of a conglomeration of -- if preferred alternative goes forward -- of access restrictions. Again, it's trying to find a balance between a principal arterial which needs to serve through mobility and also provide for the access needs of the commercial and residential dwellings along the corridor.

We will also have some cases where there is multiple accesses along the corridor where we tried to consolidate them down, you know, where someone might have three or four accesses, maybe their farm field, maybe we can consolidate those to one or two. Then, like I was saying, the access management plan will provide a tool for future planning along the corridor to assist our city and county in how accesses are developed along the corridor.

With that, I will turn it back to Chad.

MR. RICKLEFS: Thank you, Kirk. At this time, we will be briefly discussing some of the potential impacts of the preferred alternative. As part of the environmental assessment, the preferred alternative, along with all of the other alternatives in the EA were evaluated to determine its likely effect on the social, economic and physical environment. The assessment was conducted in accordance with the guidance provided by NEPA, Montana Environmental Policy Act, as well as FHWA Technical Advisory.

At this time, Kirk and I will be discussing impacts for the transportation system, the community and natural and physical environment as well.

As Deb mentioned, the purpose of the project is to improve mobility and safety in the Shiloh Road project corridor. Like all of the build alternatives, the preferred alternative meets the purpose of the project.

Now, at this time, Kirk will begin the discussion of impacts by discussing the effects on the transportation system.

MR. SPALDING: I'm going to break it into some categories, first being the effects on traffic flow. The preferred alternative, as we have it now, we looked at the different alternatives in terms of how they will provide for travel time, efficiency of operations at the intersections.

The roundabout, the roundabout alternative we have proposed in the preferred alternative would provide for approximately 35-miles-per-hour travel speed from end to end of the project. What we do is look at that compared to the no-build scenario, where we assume traffic continues to grow and the roadway starts to fall apart. We look at an average speed of around six miles per hour expected from the beginning of the project to the end of the project, depending which end you go to. So it would truly be enhanced through this design and through this layout of intersection control and with the template that we have put together for the typical section.

The next item would be on access. I touched on this before. There would definitely be impacts to the accesses along the corridor. We would be restricting a lot of the full accesses that are out there today in one fashion or another and in fact, enhancing some of the accesses in that the roundabouts do provide for U-turns, so commercial entities and accesses that might be otherwise restricted to right-in and right-out may now go just a short distance and use the roundabout as a legal U-turn maneuver and make their trip in the other direction. So that's one benefit of the roundabout versus the signalized intersection.

When you think of Grand Avenue, it's a large footprint. If you're trying to get out of the Holiday or the Exxon and make a left-hand turn, you have to go across several lanes of traffic. If you're headed east or west off of Grand Avenue there, you may have to flip a U-turn in the middle of the intersection and signal, which isn't fun.

Safety. The roundabouts have been proven time and time again, as I said, to have large safety benefits when compared to conventional signalized intersections and other forms of intersection control, basically due to the slower speed. That's largely why the incident of accidents goes down. People have more response time, and also, the lower speed reduces the severity of accidents if they do occur.

There is also a reduced number of conflict points, conflict points being a left turn versus a through movement in opposing directions. The roundabouts circulate flow in one

direction. They look to their left and make their way through the intersection after looking to their left.

The transit has been involved in this Met Trans as part of the advisory committee. We have had many discussions with them about the proposed facilities along the corridor and have worked with them to keep them included in this and make sure the project addresses their needs.

Finally, on the pedestrians and bicycles. Obviously, we have this multi-use path and the sidewalk, continuous from end to end, one on each side, that provides for intermediate crossings at just the major intersections that I identified here, the eight for now, as being the main locations for crossing. Again, all the facilities in terms of pedestrians would be ADA compliant. We have been talking with the city about the multi-use path and making sure all the facilities are ADA compliant as well. So we should have those very well addressed with this project.

Looking at the effects on the community. We have -- this is the next section of my presentation here. We talked about the traffic and now we will talk about community. The project does incorporate the local land use plans. We have the Heritage Trail plan features incorporated here with the multi-use path and some connectivity north and south. We also have been carefully trying to abide by many of the recommendations that have come out of the West Billings plan.

There are definitely going to be right-of-way impacts. We have a narrow corridor out there. We're taking a two-lane road and expanding it to a four lane with a large 20-foot center median with the preferred alternative. There is going to be impacts that people might see in terms of parking on adjacent streets where the large intersections will be put in. Private parking lots may be slightly affected at some locations.

Some other right-of-way impacts would be occurring in terms of landscaping. The grass that may exist along the corridor may have to be disrupted and replanted with another steeper slope, or a flatter slope preferably, than what is out there now.

We see a lot of utilities out in the corridor. We've heard a lot of comments about Northwest Energy's overhead transmission lines and distribution lines. The way it's proceeding with the preferred alternative is we would see the overhead utilities relocated as overhead utilities out towards the edge of the proposed right-of-way limits. Underground utilities likely will be relocated within the proposed right-of-way as well.

Finally, the irrigation. There are a lot of irrigation facilities out here. Many of them are abandoned. We're doing a careful assessment, chatting with landowners to make sure that design features that come out of this project meet their needs, and those that aren't going to be in use anymore are subject to abandonment.

So I guess that touches on it Chad, I will pass it to you.

MR. RICKLEFS: Continuing with impacts to the community resources. Regarding noise impacts, the preferred alternative results in approximately a 3- to 10-decibel increase. However, based on the analysis of the no-action, there would be a 3- to 6-decibel increase with the no-action. The difference between the no-action and preferred alternative is due mostly to the road being closer to some receptor locations or increased speeds due to better level of service under the preferred alternative.

There are no major hazardous material or contamination issues to date. If contaminated soils or hazardous materials are encountered, the excavation and disposal will be handled in compliance with applicable regulations.

In regards to cultural resources, the Yegen bunkhouse, located at the northeast corner of Broadwater and Shiloh, the Big Ditch Canal, the BBWA Canal and Snow Ditch are all eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Throughout the project, MDT consulted with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office. At this time, it was determined there would be no effect or no adverse effect to these four sites.

We will move on now to the effects to the natural and physical environment. There would be no impact to regulatory flood planes (sic). There would be no change to the existing hydrologic and hydraulic conditions at Hogan Slough. There would be approximately 2.5 acres of direct impacts to wetlands due to grading and filling for the wider roadbed construction of bridges and culverts. The majority of impacts to these wetlands are associated with Hogan Slough and Shiloh Drain. MDT will work with the Corps of Engineers to determine mitigation of these impacts.

Vegetation impacts include loss of approximately 11 acres of riparian habitat due to construction of bridges and culverts. These impacts are considered minor because the majority of this vegetation is already disturbed by the existing roadway. There would also be approximately 240 mature trees removed under the preferred alternative. During final design, MDT would look at minimizing impacts to these trees and, as a result of right-of-way negotiations and agreements with individual property owners, these trees may be replaced.

Finally with the project, there would be some construction impacts. There would be temporary increased noise, emissions and dust as well as other short-term impacts occuring during construction. These temporary construction impacts would be minimized through MDT's standard mitigation measures as well as other mitigation measures and best management practices.

This concludes the brief summary of the estimated impacts of the preferred alternative. A complete analysis of these impacts can be found in the EA, which Deb mentioned we have copies here tonight. The detailed summary that is found in the EA is also provided on the wall as you walked past on your way to your seats.

At this time, I would like to turn it back over to Paul who will now move on to the next step of this project.

MR. GRANT: Thank you, Kirk. Thank you, Deb and Chad, for giving us great information.

What we are going into now is the second phase of the hearing, which is the clarification period. This is where the consulting team will stand up here and take questions that you might have specifically related to the EA document or about the information that you just heard from the team that you may need clarification on. Again, please remember, this is the question-and-answer portion of the hearing, not a time for you to make comments. You can make your comments in the next section of the hearing in a few minutes.

At this point, I would like for you to understand that my role is to facilitate this meeting and make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak and ask questions and make comments at the appropriate time. So I apologize up front if I need to interrupt you to maybe identify your name, or if -- we want to make sure you get your comments and you

get everything you're able to say, but we may -- if your comments go for a long time, we may have to ask you to sum it up. Then, if you want to come back after everybody has had an opportunity to make their comments, that would be fine too.

Again, we want to make sure that everybody has their opportunity to speak tonight. We want to make sure we are looking at the time element as well, to make sure everybody has that opportunity.

As you can see, we have Ginni, who is the court reporter here, who will be taking verbatim everything that is stated here tonight. We ask when you come up -- we are going to ask you to form a line here. We ask, when you come up, that you state your name clearly for the court reporter, make her life a bit easier for the transcript.

In order for Ginni to get verbatim what is being stated tonight, we would appreciate it, again, if you would form a line in the center here, if you want to. If you want to sit out here and then come up, that's fine too. You don't need to stand, if that will be difficult for you.

If it's difficult for you to come up, let me know and I will come with the microphone to you. But I will stand up here with the microphone, or you can take the microphone from me to ask the question, or if you want me to hold the microphone, I can do that as well.

We ask, if you're representing yourself as a concerned citizen, just go ahead and state your name. If you're representing yourself on behalf of an organization, group or government entity, et cetera, please be sure to state that for the record and state what organization you're representing.

We will go ahead and have the consulting team come up here. Then, if you want to, go ahead and start forming the line. I will hand you the microphone and you can go ahead and ask your question.

MR. LITTLER: My name is Al Littler. I live at 4704 Burlington.

I have a question for the team. What definition of wetlands was used to determine the wetland, and how was the mitigation handled with the Corps of Engineers and with the state?

MS. PERKINSSMITH: The definition for the wetlands is -- basically, they're delineated based on the Cordian (ph) method. And what that means is that there are two types of wetlands we looked at. One, jurisdictional, which is defined by the Corps, very specifically, based on three parameters. Then there are non-jurisdictional wetlands. Those are wetlands that don't come under the Corps' jurisdiction. So we identified both of those. And then, based on that, we worked with the Corps to identify the mitigation.

Their main concern is the jurisdictional wetlands. They make the final determination as to how much of the area is actually jurisdictional wetlands. MDT does have a policy to also mitigate and identify the non-jurisdictional wetlands as well.

MR. GRANT: I ask, when you do come up, if your name -- if you have a long name or something, you may want to spell it for the court reporter as well.

MS. ZRUBEK: My name is Mary Zrubek, Z-r-u-b-e-k. I live off of Shiloh and Avenue B.

I used to live in New Jersey with roundabouts, so I have several questions pertaining to the project on Shiloh Road.

In researching and proposing the roundabout plan for Billings, what area, cities and towns did the Billings committee find that has basically the same traffic pattern and type of traffic that Shiloh has? Trucks with big stop trailers, heavy construction equipment, farm equipment, including combines, tractors, trucks, semi-trucks that deliver goods to businesses, gasoline trucks and then the three large churches on Shiloh, as well as the University at Shiloh and Central?

Now, I have other questions. Should I proceed with the question or will you answer it as we go along?

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: That comment is not specific to the EA or the presentation tonight. We ask that you submit that as part of the comment for the public hearing and we will make a formal response to that. Do you have another one?

MS. ZRUBEK: This will probably be addressed with the other. How much time has actually been spent in the areas on researching and studying the traffic?

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: Again, if you could also submit that during the public hearing portion so that we can take a look at that and provide a good response to that.

MS. ZRUBEK: Has a study been done, if the roundabouts become a reality and it creates a shift in traffic to more traffic on Grand, Broadwater, Central, 32nd, Monad? Is that also to be addressed with these other questions?

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: Yes.

MS. ZRUBEK: In the research and study of the roundabouts, have they found out any information about response time for emergency vehicles, faster, basically the same, maybe a little slower?

MR. SPALDING: In terms of emergency response, there are a lot of areas. Colorado has a number of multiple-lane roundabouts. They have put information out there in respect, and I think they have actually had some dialogue with emergency services that they put out and published in terms of how it affects response time.

We -- with this project, we did a demonstration up at the Metra and brought in -- actually the fire department brought in three fire ladder trucks and they did -- went through the demonstration to see how they felt it would affect response time. I'm not going to speak to what their actual feelings were, but it appeared that they were in favor of the roundabouts as being a good intersection for them.

MS. ZRUBEK: Last question. Earlier you stated that your study had involved safety and accidents. Why is it, then, that it's stated on the Internet that some places have removed the roundabouts and others are in the process of removing them because they weren't effective and caused too many accidents?

MR. SPALDING: We would like you to put that as a formal public comment and we will address it.

MS. HAMAN: Pegee, P-e-g-e--e, Haman, H-a-m-a-n. I want to ask some questions about the pedestrian access. On your drawing or your picture over here, you said the median was 20 feet across?

MR. SPALDING: Correct.

MS. HAMAN: On the pictures, it looks like it narrows down towards the pedestrian access.

MR. SPALDING: With the roundabouts, it actually does narrow down.

MS. HAMAN: How wide is the refuge area that you called it?

MR. SPALDING: The minimum width for a refuge area is six feet.

MS. HAMAN: Okay. On these access areas for pedestrians, will they only be at the roundabouts -- what do you call them? Those areas.

MR. SPALDING: At this point in time, the crossings for the multi-use path and the sidewalk would be at the roundabouts only.

MS. HAMAN: If somebody is on foot, they will have to walk from Monad to Central or Grand or whatever?

MR. SPALDING: Correct.

MS. HAMAN: At the places where you have the pedestrian accesses -- you probably answered this, if I understand -- is ADA the American Disabled? So you will have handicapped access?

MR. SPALDING: Correct. All the intersections, all the ramps -- from sidewalks down to the asphalt of the roadway -- would be ADA compliant.

MS. HAMAN: Then, when you were talking about the noise, is there less noise? Do you know if there is less noise with the roundabouts than there is with a traffic-signal intersection?

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: That depends on the specifics of the location. If there is a specific location that you're concerned about, maybe if you could identify that in the public hearing portion as a comment, we can look into that for you.

MS. HAMAN: Okay. Is there any plans at all during construction for dust abatement?

MR. SPALDING: Montana Department of Transportation has standard specifications during construction for dust management.

MS. HAMAN: What about construction at night?

MR. SPALDING: That would be taken into account with the special provisions, again, to place limitations on the contractor.

MS. HAMAN: So it's possible that they would be constructing things at night?

MR. SPALDING: We should have you ask this as a formal comment and we will get back to you on that.

MS. HAMAN: Thank you.

MR. COLE: My name is Bill Cole (ph). My address is 3733 Tommy Armour, here in Billings. I'm a lawyer. I have been asked to ask some questions on behalf of a client who couldn't be here tonight. That is, Ed and Gloria Horab, H-o-r-a-b, who live in the Ponderosa Town Homes, Unit 47.

The Ponderosa Town Homes -- in particular here is between Decathlon and Olympic -- their unit is on the far west side or close to it. They probably are the closest existing structure, their town home is, to the existing pavement on Shiloh. So they had essentially three questions. Let me -- if I can, I will give you each a copy.

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: I was going to say, those probably should be entered as part of the public comment during the public hearing.

MR. COLE: We can do that. Will you not respond now to them? Should I delay those questions until then?

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: Yes, I suggest you do.

MR. COLE: Okay.

MR. CUCCIARDI: Thank you very much for this opportunity. I am handicapped. I have Parkinson's, as you can probably see, so I'm glad to see that the access is handicap accessible.

My name is Mike Cucciardi. I live at 626 South 38th Street West, Unit 48. I'm speaking on behalf of myself and my wife, and I am taking information on behalf of the board of the Ponderosa Town Homes.

Couple of questions. I have talked personally to Mr. Spalding and Ms. Beaudry about some issues that would, in fact, impact our locations, since we are in one of those high-density locations. That is, the mitigation of noise.

Kirk, is it still planned -- is it still a plan to lower the street in front of the Ponderosa Town Homes and utilize that fill further north?

MR. SPALDING: I can answer the first part of your question. As we have looked at the vertical grades out there, there is a high-pressure gas main under the roadway, so lowering the grades doesn't appear to be an option for us right now. But in final design, we may be able to look at that a little further.

MR. CUCCIARDI: The second thing is, I notice you do have the sidewalk between the homes and the, I'll say, berm and the roadway, where before you had it next to the road, which I do agree with. I think it would be very important, if you cannot lower the roadway, to have a higher berm, as you mentioned, with either boulders or shrubs or trees, et cetera.

And is this, in fact, something that you're looking at for us, to mitigate the noise?

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: We suggest you make that comment during the public comment part of the hearing and that way we will have to respond to that.

MR. CUCCIARDI: The last thing I would like to say is, are we to take it as fact that there will not be any SIDs or SLMDs unless we want to have something over and above the final plan as voted on at the final? For instance, the berm?

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: Can I ask you to defer that question to the public hearing? That is something that is not specific to the environmental assessment.

In terms of clarification, people, the purpose right now to these questions and answers is to clarify something that we said in our presentation. At the public hearing portion, that's the key time to actually enter your comments, especially if you would like a written response that everybody will see, including people who are not here tonight. That is the formal part.

This is not your opportunity to say something. During the public hearing, we would actually provide a more detailed response to most of your comments.

MR. CUCCIARDI: Okay. I will do so. Thank you.

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: Thanks, Paul. I reiterate, this is an opportunity to get your comments entered into the record by filling out the comment sheet and leaving it here tonight or mailing it to MDT. That has the same weight as actually making a comment during the public hearing part that will follow shortly.

MR. LYNCH: In the public hearing process -- for clarification, so that they understand, on the public hearing process, they are going to make their comments to you. Your response is not going to be tonight.

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: That's correct.

MR. LYNCH: I want to make sure everyone understand that. It gives you an opportunity to make a comment and they will prepare a detailed response to your comment that will come later.

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: That's correct. You're on the record with a comment and we need to respond to that in writing.

MR. LYNCH: The purpose of what they are doing right now is to ask questions.

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: Just to clarify.

MR. LYNCH: Clarify what is going on, to basically refine a comment they may have heard during the hearing process.

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: Sure. That's a good way to put it. Thank you.

MR. GAMBLE: Thank you. My name is Charlie Gamble, G-a-m-b-l-e.

I'm referring back to a comment that was just made a moment ago about the tests of the roundabouts up at the Metra. I've driven back in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania and places like that and seen roundabouts in action. I'm not really in love with them, but you made a comment that you tested these up at the Metra. And I think you had three fire engines or something of that nature that made the roundabouts.

My question of you is this: When you were doing the tests with the police cars and the fire engines, did you have six lanes of traffic coming into that, as you will have out here, doing 45 miles an hour?

MR. SPALDING: That has to be deferred, because it's not about the EA.

MR. GAMBLE: You could say yes or no.

MR. SPALDING: I can tell you that the demonstration that was done at the Metra was based on the footprint of a roundabout for the corridor, not on a six-lane traffic facility.

MR. GAMBLE: Well, Shiloh Road is going to have lanes going north and south, two lanes each, and at the roundabouts you're going to have east and west traffic, one lane each coming in. You've got six lanes of traffic entering in with those six fire engines. Now, is that correct? You didn't have them, did you?

MR. SPALDING: We did not have a lot of conflicting traffic, no, sir.

MR. CLEM (sic) (Flynn): My name is John Clem (sic) (Flynn) (ph), 2302 South 40th West.

Since the multi-use path and sidewalk are a big selling point of this whole project, how much safer is pedestrian traffic, in particular for cognitively impaired or elderly or children, as compared to lighted intersections? How much safer is it at a roundabout?

MR. SPALDING: That is a question we should respond to with a formal comment in the public hearing.

MR. CLEM (sic) (Flynn): You didn't study it and can't tell me?

MR. SPALDING: The quantitative measure you're asking for would be difficult to compare apples to apples from intersection to intersection.

MR. CLEM (sic) (Flynn): Really?

MR. EREKSON: My name is Robert Erekson, spelled E-r-e-k-s-o-n. I live at 541 Park Lane.

My first question is, will there be frontage roads?

MR. SPALDING: We aren't proposing any frontage roads.

MR. EREKSON: Are or are not?

MR. SPALDING: Are not.

MR. EREKSON: That's great. As I understand what you said -- and I ask this question as he did -- it's not really -- or are you really taking your life in your own hands as a pedestrian going across these places where there are roundabouts where there is no lights?

MR. SPALDING: Currently, the roundabouts are designed to meet ADA's current standards. If they evolve through the project life and things like pedestrian signals become a requirement, certainly the State would come forward and implement those features as needed and required.

MR. EREKSON: How come it's a 20-foot median? Why that much?

MR. SPALDING: The 20-foot median is actually so that you can provide left-turn access at mid-block crossings. It allows for the raised median to still be present, providing a 12-foot travel lane with adequate shoulders and separation. That's why it's so wide, for mid-block intersections.

MR. EREKSON: In other words, there will be -- besides the roundabouts, there will be access with left turns in between.

MR. SPALDING: There are several locations within the preferred alternative where we will provide that three-quarter access which we talked about which requires that median break.

MR. EREKSON: My main question is, why are you taking out the lights at Grand Avenue and Shiloh?

MR. SPALDING: This project is designed for a 20-year design life, so we look at the needs for projected traffic flows through 20 years. Grand Avenue wouldn't be sufficient to meet that capacity requirement, so it needs to be torn out. Whether it was replaced with a signal or roundabout, it would require complete reconstruction.

MR. EREKSON: Nice waste of money.

MR. KUCK: My name is Dan Kuck, K-u-c-k.

My question is on the way the road is designed as far as the drainage. Is there going to be adequate drainage and where is that going to go?

MR. SPALDING: As I mentioned before, the drainage through the curb and gutter sections will be conveyed to the Hogan Slough and Shiloh Drain. The Shiloh Drain is part of the city's storm water master plan for receiving water. That is where the storm water goes.

MR. KUCK: That will last for a 20-year projection on everything there or is it capacity?

MR. SPALDING: We haven't completed final design on the hydraulics because we are in this environmental process of alternatives, but we will be evaluating needs of detention/retention as well in the Shiloh Drain.

MR. KUCK: The other thing I was wondering about was the acreage, the difference you have in acreage here as far as the traffic signals, the roundabouts here, the reason for the drastic difference in that. Is that because your basic road is going to be the same dimensions other than your intersections on the right-of-way? Also, in the same question in there, is that just like 28 or 25 acres total that they are talking about there?

MR. SPALDING: When we looked at the signalized alternative, if we just for a moment think about King Avenue and Shiloh, that intersection, to meet a 20-year design, traffic volumes will require double left-hand turns and an exclusive right turn, plus two through lanes. That is five lanes for one direction of travel on one approach, whereas the roundabout has two entering lanes far away and as you approach the roundabout. That's why the dramatic differences occur.

Similarly, on the side streets, for example King Avenue with the roundabout, we can taper down to the existing two-lane footprint on both sides quite quickly, whereas when we have right-turn lanes and left-turn lanes and those kind of features for the signalized alternative, we have quite a bit more impacted area.

That's why you see the dramatic differences. It's not because of the distance between the intersections. It's actually as a result of the intersection improvements.

MR. KUCK: That number is the intersection acres then?

MR. SPALDING: No. It's total. It's entire corridor impact. But the difference is resulting from those isolated areas from the intersection improvements.

MR. KUCK: I think that was it. I will come up again.

MR. STARR: Sterling Starr from 3713 Tommy Armour.

A point of clarification. I like very much your illustration. Came in late so I didn't hear your presentation, but basic question is, have you relocated the huge, ugly power lines that run down Shiloh Road, or bury them so it will look attractive like it looks now?

MR. SPALDING: That is explained in the EA, so I can touch on that. The current plan is to relocate the overhead transmission lines as overhead transmission lines, not as direct buried. We did look at coordinating with Northwest Energy and Yellowstone Valley Electric on the costs associated with undergrounding versus overhead relocation, and the dollar amounts were somewhere between one million versus four million. So the overhead relocation is likely what will occur.

MR. STARR: Where would they be relocated to?

MR. SPALDING: The final location of the overhead transmission line and distribution hasn't been determined yet. We will be working with Northwestern Energy and Yellowstone Valley Electric in the final design.

MR. GRANT: Are there any other questions? Anybody else want to ask a question before we move on?

MR. KUCK: I knew there was one more. Why does Zoo Drive not connect with the Zoo and why is that only a two lane there? Do you follow what I'm saying? The intersection of Zoo Drive down to the Zoo entrance.

MR. SPALDLNG: Why doesn't it connect to the Zoo?

MR. KUCK: That is supposed to be two lanes, right?

MR. SPALDLNG: It transitions from four lanes north of Zoo Drive down to two lanes on the other side of the intersection. It's not a four lane between Zoo Montana and Zoo Drive.

MR. KUCK: Why does it transition there, not further south?

MR. SPALDING: The traffic volumes that we have -- and it matches a lot of what you see out there in existing conditions in terms of distribution -- as soon as you cross Zoo Drive and get south of the intersection, the volumes drop dramatically. The 2020 volumes are like 7500 south of Zoo Drive and 2800 (sic) (28,000) north of Zoo Drive, so there isn't a need for the additional lanes south of Zoo Drive.

MR. KUCK: No anticipation of great Zoo visitors?

MR. SPALDING: I'm not sure I totally understand the question.

MR. KUCK: Having a lot of visitors at the Zoo.

MR. SPALDING: Our traffic projections take into account the type of businesses and amenities that are along the corridor down there, so seeing it go from approximately 3800 existing to 7500 is what we saw.

MR. KUCK: 20-year projection now?

MR. SPALDING: 20-year projection.

MR. GRANT: Any other questions? Thank you very much for taking the time to come up and ask the questions. We appreciate that very much.

Now we will move into the final phase of the hearing, which is the formal public hearing period. Before we begin this period, could I see a show of hands of those who wish to make a comment tonight? Thank you.

As you can see, we do have a few people who want to make some comments, and berm to hear your comments and have everybody have an opportunity to speak. So we ask that you be respectful to the rest of the participants regarding the time and your comments.

As we did mention, there are other opportunities available for you to comment if you're not prepared to speak tonight or something comes up that you think of when you go home or you look at the EA document at another opportunity.

You can also mail in your comments. You can pick up the comment sheets in the back of the foyer or you can go online to the website listed on the comment sheet and put in your comments that way. We encourage and remind you your comments need to be submitted in writing by February 12th.

In order for the court reporter to get verbatim what is stated tonight, we ask you, again, to come up and form a line and to speak directly to the court reporter when you're making your comments so that she can get the record complete. Again, I would ask you to speak your name, spell it if need be, and if you're representing yourself, go ahead and just say your name. If you're representing an organization or government entity, please state that as well before you make your comments.

So if you want to go ahead and form a line again. We will start the comment period of the formal hearing.

MR. DAHL: My name is Matt Dahl, D-a-h-l.

I have several comments. My brother in New Jersey says that the State of New Jersey is removing all roundabouts. I also have firsthand information that the City of Edmonton, Alberta is also removing all roundabouts because of the amount of traffic accidents in those places.

I also had a question of this six miles per hour down the Shiloh Road. When and is this supposed to happen as the average speed down Shiloh, four-way stop at Central and Shiloh wasn't a very good idea, but the traffic light seems to be working nicely now.

I've been in D.C., Colorado, a number of places around New Jersey. Everywhere and everyone I have talked to hates roundabouts. That's my comment, and I hate them too. Thank you.

MS. SORENSON: My name is Joan Sorenson, S-o-r-e-n-s-o-n.

I have one very brief comment about the safety issue as well. I lived for 12 years in New Jersey and acknowledge that the volume and perhaps the driver style may be a little different in New Jersey than here. So we anticipate growth of traffic on Shiloh, certainly not a decrease in that, and that's why we are doing this. And I know that navigating two lanes of traffic and lane changes with anything but a minimum volume of traffic in order to affect a left turn can be a pretty dangerous business. I would like to see more elucidation of the data on the safety of the roundabout versus a traffic light.

Then also, I represent the PTA of the Arrowhead Elementary School. And I would just like to get on record our concerns about the safety of the crosswalk which currently exists across Shiloh at Poly Drive. Acknowledging that one of our community values, I think, is developing independence and fitness in our school kids, and walking to school and biking to school is really, I think, an important part of that. It's involved in the concept of neighborhood schools which we all seem to be promoting. We just want to make sure that the safety of our crosswalk at Poly and Shiloh is kept as a high priority during the whole development. That account represents the northern end of the development area.

MR. SCHILTZ: My name is Richard Schiltz, S-c-h-i-l-t-z.

My concern is the pedestrians. I'm a disabled American veteran. I'm visually impaired and a couple of years ago I spent some time in a wheelchair.

And the government gives us about four seconds a foot to cross a street. And the other thing is, if you're on a crosswalk, less than 20 percent of the cars yield to pedestrians. How do they figure one's gonna get across the street? And a car going 30 miles an hour covers 44 feet per second. So it's going to be a real, I guess, crap shoot to get across the street. With that in mind, thank you all.

MR. CUCCIARDI: Thank you. Mike Cucciardi again, 626 South 38 Street West, Unit 48, Ponderosa Town Homes Association.

I was on city council a lot of years ago, and there was a study done that crosswalks by themselves actually are not as safe as the lights are. Children that use a crosswalk have a false sense of security in that they look down between the lines and they walk. Sometimes might even be safer if there wasn't a crosswalk. I wanted to bring that up and ask if that is still a valid point, because this lady does have a concern and I think it does need to be answered.

As far as the noise mitigation, I understand if you can cover the tires with a solid fencing or berm of some sort that, in fact, you don't have to go up above the top of the cars or the trucks, but just covering the tires would lower the noise.

I also am worried about pedestrians and the handicapped. It's like the blind leading the blind. I had an elderly lady going across King Avenue. By the time both of us got about halfway across the second section, the light was already turning red.

I also think the roundabouts would, in fact, lower the noise level where we are because of things like jake-braking by some of the large vehicles. When they come to a stop sign, they begin to jake-brake rather than use their brakes, and the noise at one or two o'clock in the morning is very loud. Also, when cars start and stop, or when they start again from a light, they would make more noise than if they just slowed down and regained some speed. Thank you.

MR. KEEBLER: My name is Les Keebler (ph).

I don't have an axe to grind, but I only have some design questions about capacity. The questions have already been partially answered, that apparently this is a 20-year design life. And I hope it is. We in Billings too often are burdened with streets that are under-designed the day they are opened. And so at this plan, I would like to kind of know what is the potential for growth. I visualize these might need to be six or eight lanes 20 years down the line.

It looks like this could be a good design as far as potential for widening or whatever. I'm not sure what roundabouts will do for that potential. If there is much more traffic, wider lanes coming into a roundabout, can they handle it? Maybe it can, maybe it's the best way to do it. I'm just not sure.

MR. COLE: Bill Cole (ph), 3733 Tommy Armour, representing Ed and Gloria Horab.

My first question is, it's my understanding that these questions will be answered in writing, correct? I'm going to submit, if I can to you guys, written copies of those questions. Even if I don't touch on them all on these comments-slash-questions, if you could refer to the written version so you can answer what is written there.

The Horabs, as I said earlier, live extremely close to the eastern edge of the pavement south of Olympic -- or between Olympic and Decathlon.

The first question is: How will the likely -- or what will the location of the roadway be relative to the existing location? Right now I think they are only about 40 feet away. Specifically, is the pavement and the roadway going to get closer than it already is?

Related to that, what kind of considerations have been given to mitigating noise impacts, division impacts, things like that? In particular, an earthen berm.

The next question relates to the Shiloh Drain and, specifically, how does the location of the Shiloh Drain impact the ability to move the location of the road westward away from the structures that are already very close on the east side?

And related to that, I guess, is there a possibility of enclosing all or parts of the Shiloh Drain to allow movement of the road to the west? And obviously that would be an expensive proposition.

My client had an additional question. Have all possible funding sources, federal and state, been pursued to look into enclosing all or parts of the Shiloh Drain?

Then also, are any -- is any of the Shiloh corridor now in a public parkway? I don't believe it is. But if it is, is any of that park plan available for moving the roadway to the west?

And then, lastly, if there were a reduction in the value of any of the impacted properties, has any arrangement for compensation been considered? And if so, what is it? And if not, why not? Thank you.

MS. PERKINS-SMITH: I request that this be entered into the formal record.

MS. ZRUBEK: Mary Zrubek again. I came here with concerns and questions before the meeting, and I must say I'm leaving with even more.

On page three of the MDT brochure it states: Modern roundabouts were selected over traffic signals because, for this corridor, roundabouts would provide slightly better level of service, slightly reduced corridor travel time, potentially greater reduction in crash rates and severity.

Now, you've heard from a couple of us tonight about the roundabouts that are being taken out in different states. And with the demonstration that was done at the Metra for the emergency vehicles, in my mind, I really have a question about the cost, the time, the effort and everything else that is involved if roundabouts are really a viable situation for 10-year, 20-year plan on down the line for Billings. Thank you.

MR. CLEM (sic) (Flynn): John Clem (sic) (Flynn). According to the environmental assessment, pedestrian crossings are safer at lighted intersections. I just want to make that clear to the county commissioners, since they are the only ones that get elected in the group that has chosen roundabouts for you. Once the accidents happen, it's too late to decide that berm (sic) traffic signals instead of these roundabouts.

I drive 50,000 miles a year across the United States, through Dallas, through Los Angeles, through Chicago. I never see any of these roundabouts. Three weeks ago, I ran into one in St. George, Utah. It's very confusing coming right off the interstate onto this roundabout. There was a gravel truck in there, a lot of tourists that didn't understand how they work.

I've been saying this since they started coming up with the idea. And I was a little confused, came to a complete stop before I got in there. Traffic backed up behind me. I

can't imagine how it's going to be going through eight of these on the way to the airport and then getting to the airport and having that little darling that's going to be up at the airport intersection.

I don't think it's a coincidence the five they have planned in Red Lodge has a clinic at one end and a fire department at the other end. I just don't know how we got this far into the roundabouts without having some public comment about it. I haven't heard a single person get up here and say a positive thing about roundabouts, except a couple of people who wanted to tell us they have been to Europe and drove the roundabouts.

Of course it's easy with people who have been driving in them all their life. Half of the 28,000 vehicles that are going to be on Shiloh Road have never seen a roundabout before -- when they meet you there, and it's going to be a wreck.

MR. EREKSON: My name is Robert Erekson, E-r-e-k-s-o-n, 541 Park Lane.

If any of you haven't tried roundabouts, you should go down to Idaho Falls and try theirs. They have got four or five of them on, I think it's called, 25th Street. It runs from south of Yukon all the way down to Straight Street all the way down to 17th Avenue South, part of Idaho Falls. There are four or five of them there.

When I first ran into them I was totally taken aback. They are the worst things that have ever been thought up for traffic.

It takes me roughly five to seven minutes longer to go from 17th Street to the highway going north than it used to. And the traffic isn't a bit better. In fact, it's worse. You really need to experience it.

And this idea that we have here to rip out our existing signals because they don't meet some 20-year basis, well, let's use these for 10 years and put in the new ones when we need them, instead of wasting all the money we already spent for traffic signals.

I understand there is some talk of taking the red lights out at Zimmerman Trail and Grand Avenue to help things out. They are not going to be any frontage roads. You're really taking your life in your hands if you're in a wheelchair or a bicycle or walking anywhere along there. And for people to say that they are safer, they are not.

Anyway, that's about all I have to say about it. I talked to a lady when it first came up. I was up in the exercise room at St. Vincent's Hospital and I talked to a lady who had just come back from England. She said that is the worst experience she ever had in her life was the roundabouts in England. Of course, it was bad enough that they had to drive on the left side of the road, but then the roundabouts, she said, in three different occasions, they went around the roundabouts three times before they could get off.

Now, with the assessment that we have heard here, that we are going to have a lot more traffic on Shiloh Road in the next 20 years, how in the world are these roundabouts going to accommodate that traffic? It just isn't going to happen. If we don't get into a lot more accidents with that and the beauty they will put up by the airport, I will put in with you.

MS. HAMAN: Well, I guess I will go against the group here. The first roundabout I was ever in was in Mexico City, and it scared me to death. And then I realized that it would have been worse if it hadn't been there.

The second one I was in was in Spokane, Washington, and it was on a small street and it worked very, very well. The third one I was in was in New York City, and if it hadn't been

a roundabout and had been a traffic control place in that area, which was Columbus Circle, I would still be there, because the traffic wouldn't move.

There is -- the more traffic you have, the more back-ups you're going to have at stop lights, even if they try to arrange the stop lights so that they are in rhythm. Because often times, you know, just going down Grand, they are out of rhythm. And I like the fact that roundabouts are a little quieter because we don't have all of these semis going through their gear changes. That's my comment.

Oh, I do have one more comment. When I look at these drawings and things, I am a little worried about where the cars go when emergency vehicles are coming down the street. I guess they are wide enough. About the emergency vehicles going through the roundabouts, they will have their sirens on, so obviously you will know they're there and you get out of their way.

MR. GRANT: Any other comments that you would like to put on the record?

MS. ARAGON: My name is Kathy Aragon, A-r-a-g-o-n. I live at 645 O'Malley Drive in Billings.

I'm also involved with kids biking and walking to school. My kids walk and bike to school. I would like to request that you put safe pedestrian crossings at all intersections, not just the eight ones that you mentioned to be considered there, because I do encourage kids to walk and bike to school.

If we were all walking and biking, we wouldn't be worried about the traffic. We found that our parents that drag their kids to school create 30 percent of the traffic. So we are creating our own problems, becoming more and more involved in getting in our cars when we could walk and bicycle those errands.

So I will get off the soapbox and ask if you will please incorporate pedestrian and bicycle crossings. I think as -- I looked at a lot of research, and it's the traffic that is going fast that is killing pedestrians and bicyclists. So if what the Department of Transportation or the city is doing to slow down the traffic really makes it safer for our kids and our families and the elderly and anybody else trying to walk or bicycle across the street, I'm all for it.

So if we slow down the traffic somehow and hopefully get the flow to be greater while the traffic speed is less, I think we accomplish some good things for the city. So I would like you to incorporate those crossings, please.

MR. KUCK: I don't understand eight of them. It's going to be a new shock to drivers. Central and Shiloh for years is a four-way stop. I don't want to go farther than that. They had a hard time with the stop sign, let alone something new and multiplying it by eight times.

MR. GRANT: Any other comments?

MR. EREKSON: I would like to make one more comment. I would like to know why they are taking out all the roundabouts in Edmonton and New Jersey and other places? What is wrong with them, then? Why are we getting them when they are taking them out? That's my question. What is going on here?

MR. CRANDALL: My name is William Crandall, C-r-a-n-d-a-l-l.

I don't know much about you guys as far as whether you live here or you don't. I just know that I drive this road every day. I'm a Pizza Hut delivery driver. I'm probably 40 times at least, in a week, on Shiloh. And whether they put in the roundabouts or the stop signs, anything is better than nothing. Because as it is, it's already hard enough.

MR. LITTLER: Al Littler. I live at 4704 Burlington.

The concept of the corridor in 20 years from now makes a great deal of sense. I do not want to travel north and south on 24th Street West. I don't want to travel east and west on Grand Avenue. Commercial right up to the sidewalk, traffic lights, congested. It's a mess. The concept here on the West End was to have a corridor that you could move traffic. You're going to have shopping centers, medical facilities. There will be lots of things adjacent to the corridor. So we are so critical of the corridor when, in fact, we are losing the concept.

This is a new concept to move a lot of traffic on the West End, which we can't do now. These farm-to-market roads are not going to handle it. I live on one. My wife and I won't walk on 48th anymore because of the traffic. As a matter of fact, we ran over one guy right out by my driveway, killed him. We ran over him twice as a matter of fact. First guy hit him, didn't stop, the second guy hit him. So I'm telling you the concept makes sense. I think we have to not lose sight of that.

MR. GRANT: Any further comments?

MR. LYNCH: One more call.

I would like to thank you for coming tonight, and remember there is no such thing as a bad comment. I want to really impress upon you that if some of you are thinking when you leave here tonight, "I wished I would have said something," you still have the opportunity through February 12th to write up the comment and give it to the Department of Transportation.

Again, I want to emphasize there is no such thing as a bad comment. If you think it's important to talk about, let's hear it so we can comment on it, do some research on it and get your answers back. Because this is the time to do that, before we get further into the project.

So, again, on behalf of the Department of Transportation and Engineering, Inc. and David Evans and myself -- and I'm going to turn it over to Paul -- I really appreciate your coming out tonight and taking the effort to be involved in your community, to help make the right decision that you're going to live with and drive on in the future here on Shiloh Road. Thank you for coming out and, again, do not be afraid to contact our office and give additional comments or even ask us some questions. That's what we are here for. Thank you very much for the public hearing.

MR. GRANT: Thank you, Jim.

In closing, first off, I want to thank all of you for being a great audience. I appreciate your comments and your effort to be here tonight and doing it in such an ordinarily fashion. I know you're very compassionate about this project and we appreciate your working with us. So I want to -- on behalf of Montana Department of Transportation, I want to thank you for that.

Also, the staff will be here after the conclusion of this hearing. If you have any other questions or you want to see more of the diagrams and everything, please feel free to stay around.

Remember that the comments have to be in by February 12th. Also, I would like to say that I'm the Title 6 representative for our department at MDT and the director's office regarding non-discrimination regarding these meetings. We do have a handout regarding Title 6. If you have any questions regarding possible discrimination of whatever it might be regarding these meetings, please see me afterwards and I will be glad to talk to you.

Again, thank you for coming and you will be hearing from us soon. Thank you very much.

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER.

I, Virginia Leyendecker, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the testimony as taken stenographically by and before me at the date, time and location aforementioned.

I do further certify that I am neither a relative nor employee, nor attorney or counsel to any parties involved; that I am neither related to nor employed by any such attorney or counsel, and that I am not financially interested in the action.

Virginia E. Leyendecker CSR

Notary Public

My Commission expires (July 7, 2009) NJ C.S.R. License No. XI-1701

Shiloh Road - Corridor EA
Public Hearing; - February 6,2007
Questions submitted by Ed and Gloria Horab, Ponderosa Townhomes
Unit 47
(625 S. 3gth Street West)

1. As of now, how close will the nearest Ponderosa Townhome be when Shiloh Road is widened? We need to know this exact figure. Is there an alternative plan to give us more space? Is MDT planning to build the landscaped earth berm that we want?

2. Does the open drainage channel (Shiloh Drain) restrict the location of Shiloh Road, and does this prevent MDT from giving us more space?

3. Has anyone contacted our senators and representatives (federal and state) to ask for additional funding to enclose this channel and explain in detail why we need additional funding? We would like to read that letter if there is such a letter.

4. Is there existing parkland along Shiloh Road? If so, can it be eliminated to gain more space? We do not have enough money to maintain the parks we have.

5. If the value of our property along Shiloh is reduced as a result of the project will we be compensated for the reduction? Was this idea ever considered by someone connected with this project? If not, why not.

End of transcription

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Faith Evangelical Church

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Name	Address	☑ (Please ✓ if you wish to give a statement tonight.)
MARK Bell	524 N 23rd Billings Mont	259-3027
Antony T[illegible]	139 Prickett	259-315[illegible]
Kara Grill	3900 Olympic blvd	
Becky Young	Engineering, Inc. Rep.	
Peggy Haman	626 So 38th St. West #2 Billings	655-4318
J.D. Schuman	6271 Inverwood Drive	
Bill [illegible]	Box 73 Acton Mt.	947 2311
Debr Meling	City	
Mary [illegible]	3825 AVE B #4 BILLINGS, MT	✓
Les & Marilyn [illegible]	1718 Golden Blvd.	652-7571
Myron & Elnora Reese	1630 Golden Blvd	656-9757
HARRY BEAUMAN	14 SADDLE Tree pL	

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Name	Address	☑ (Please ✓ if you wish to give a statement tonight.)
Doug Clark	P.O. Box 20377, Billings 59104	
Sky Kinz	940 Governors Blvd Billings	
Walt Fegler	2110 Overland Ave, Suite 124	
Shelly Gamo	676 S 38th St W #45 Billings, MT 59102	
Dan Kuck	PO Box 22291 Bllgs 59104	
Kenneth m Hall	4115 Wall Pl.	
Doug James	1570 Westridge Circle Billings 59102	
[illegible]	6250 38th St W. #48 Billings, Mt. 59102	
L Kuhn	3125 Ave F	
Tim Pell	4440 Ridgewood Ln S 59104	✓
Richard Clark	City Billings	

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Name	Address	☑ (Please ✓ if you wish to give a statement tonight.)
RICHARD M SCHILTZ	2460 VILLAGE #304B	✓
Chris G. Yeyen	POB 959 Billings, MT 59103	✓
Jeff Lee	3933 Temple Pl Blgs	
BARRY NOLAN	3005 FAIRWAY DR	
Erica DeGrand	1513 Westchester Sq.	
Neil Schlaeppi	6606 Grand Ave	✓
LOREN JANSSEN	4580 LAREDO PL	
Ron Pearson	3352 Canyon Dr.	
Gary Annies	PO Box 21015 Blgs 59104	
Dwight Kupfer	443 Greensprings Dr	
Jeff Peter	3627 Terry Ave	
Delaris Hall	415 Welch Au	

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Name	Address	☑ (Please ✓ if you wish to give a statement tonight.)
[illegible signature]	1819 Crystal Dr.	
[illegible signature]	1819 Crystal Dr.	
Jim Reno	1141 Toole Ct	
Nancy Downer	3108 40th St. West	
Larry Downer	3108 40th St. West	
Jim Otrembr	5038 Conestoga Ave Billings MT 59106	
[illegible signature]	2082 Swanson Ln.	
Norbert Lehenbauer	1790 Shiloh Rd	
Jenna Murnich	914 S 30th Billings, MT 59101	
Cara Buch	3305 Arthur Ave 59101	
John Ostlund	Commissioner	
PHIL BELL	3426 TIMBERLINE D. PHOTOGRAPHER	

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Name	Address	☑ (Please ✓ if you wish to give a statement tonight.)
Blanche Blum	6265 38th ... #49 Blgs. 59102	
Dave Swanson	720 Brewers Ave Blgs, 59101	
Randy Reger	Box 1782 Billings, Mt. 59103	
Debbie Reger	2708 Palm Dr. Billings Mt 59102	
Dave Schuman	607 1/2 Burlington	
[illegible]	393 Wat 48	
[illegible]	541 [illegible] Lane	✓
Oscar L. Heinrich	4210 Wells Pl.	
Gloria Reese	1630 Golden Blvd.	
Mike Black	Yellowstone County Public Works	
Bob Moats	Yellowstone County Public Works	
Al Littler	4704 Burlington Billings 59106	

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Name	Address	☑ (Please ✓ if you wish to give a statement tonight.)
Chad Peterson	3440 Granger Ave S	
MARILYN HUGHES	626 SO. 38TH. WEST, #46	
CHAS. Welden	2244 S. SHILOH	
Brian Erickson	2208 Shiloh	
Brennalyn	1715 2nd St. W 59101	
DAVE STEARSRUD	3319 LLOYD MANGRUM	✓
Scerean Keller	1809 Briarwood	✓
Shoots Vets	City Council	
Darlene Tussing	City/County Planning	
Kathy Aragon	645 O'Malley Drive	✓
MICHAEL SANDERSON	3177 Sycamore Ln	
Dave Biegel	4221 Wells place	

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Name	Address	☑ (Please ✓ if you wish to give a statement tonight.)
Joan Sorenson	4555 Upland Dr	✓
CANDI BEAUDRY Planning Director	4th Floor Library 510 N Broadway	
Karen Sanford Gall	3110 E. MacDonald	✓
Heather Dorn	27 moss lane	
CHAD RICKLEFS	DAVID EVANS & ASSOC. INC DENVER, CO	
DEB PERKINS-SMITH	DAVID EVANS & ASSOC. INC. DENVER, CO	
KIRK SPALDING	Engineering, Inc Rep Billings	

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TINA VOLEK CITY OF BILLINGS	210 N 27TH BILLINGS, MT 59106	
Bill Kennedy Yellowstone Co.	P.O. Box 35000 59107	
John Clexton	3145 Sweetwater Drive	
Brittany Law	1304 Avenue E	
Peggie Gaghen	87 Mountain View 59101	
Nancy Boyer	505 Woollard Dr.	
Bill Cole	3733 Tommy Armour	✓
Bruce Nielsen	316 Bench Blvd	
MATTHEW DAHL	2786 WESTFIELD DR BLGS	NO ROOM ABOVE
Ron Tussing	PO Box 1178	

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Name	Address	☑ (Please ✓ if you wish to give a statement tonight.)
Elizabeth Potter	3731 Hayden Drive 59102	yes
ART NEILL	2645 GOODMAN BLGS 59101	
Bart Coslet	2441 Applewood Ave, Billings, MT 59102	
Don See	725 6th st west	
CARL JAMES	Helena	
Brooke Fenyn	BILLINGS	
John Flynn	IL	
Libby Chavez	4535 Upland Dr 59106	
Lisa Kurdziawa		
William Crandall	4191 Morgan Ave 59101	
Heather Demaray	3023 Oakhills Rd 59102	
Doug Jenkins	5629 Billy Casper Dr. 59106	

STPU 1031(2) CN 4666 February 1, 2007

Comments Received During the Public Comment Period and MDT's Responses

Comments 1-15 are taken from the February 6, 2007 Public Hearing transcript. Comments 16-52 are other comments submitted during the public comment period.

No.	Name	Affiliation	Comment	Response
1	Matt Dahl	Individual	**1a.** I have several comments. My brother in New Jersey says that the State of New Jersey is removing all roundabouts. I also have firsthand information that the City of Edmonton, Alberta is also removing all roundabouts because of the amount of traffic accidents in those places.	**1a.** Both the Director of Project Planning and Development and the Supervising Engineer for the Traffic Engineering Division of the New Jersey Department of Transportation were contacted. They indicated that New Jersey is not removing roundabouts, but rather older style traffic circles, often referred to as rotaries. They also indicated that the State of New Jersey is currently looking at numerous locations for installing roundabouts. The Director of Community Transportation Planning at the City of Edmonton was contacted and indicated that they are not removing their roundabouts. The City has both roundabouts and traffic circles, and it is the traffic circles that are being removed gradually. The City of Edmonton has removed as many as three of their older traffic circles and replaced them with alternate forms of intersection control, since they were no longer able to provide sufficient capacity for safe and efficient operation.
			1b. I also had a question of this six miles per hour down the Shiloh Road. When and is this supposed to happen as the average speed down Shiloh, four-way stop at Central and Shiloh wasn't a very good idea, but the traffic light seems to be working nicely now.	**1b.** The value mentioned is the calculated travel time for the No Build Alternative in year 2027 which assumes no improvements to Shiloh Road. The traffic volumes on Shiloh Road near Central Avenue intersection are anticipated to more than triple on the south approach of the intersection, so the existing intersection configuration would be very ineffective for moving traffic through the intersection in the future.

No.	Name	Affiliation	Comment	Response
			1c. I've been in D.C., Colorado, a number of places around New Jersey. Everywhere and everyone I have talked to hates roundabouts. That's my comment, and I hate them too. Thank you.	**1c.** Comment noted. A 2005 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) study (*Traffic Flow and Public Opinion: Newly Installed Roundabouts in New Hampshire, New York, and Washington*, Retting et al.) measured public opinion before and after construction of roundabouts in several communities and evaluated the impact of roundabout construction on traffic flow. Three communities where stop-sign- or traffic-signal-controlled intersections were replaced with roundabouts in 2004 were the subject of this research. Overall, 36% of drivers supported the roundabouts before construction compared with 50% shortly after construction. Roundabouts had positive effects on traffic flow. Average intersection delays during peak hours at the three sites were reduced by 83 to 93%. Traffic congestion, as measured by the vehicle-to-capacity ratio, was reduced by 58 to 84%. These results provide further evidence that roundabouts can improve traffic flow and that public support for roundabouts increases after they are in place.

No.	Name	Affiliation	Comment	Response
2	Joan Sorenson	PTA/ Arrowhead Elementary School	**2a.** I have one very brief comment about the safety issue as well. I lived for 12 years in New Jersey and acknowledge that the volume and perhaps the driver style may be a little different in New Jersey than here.	**2a.** Comment noted.
			2b. So we anticipate growth of traffic on Shiloh, certainly not a decrease in that, and that's why we are doing this.	**2b.** Yes, traffic forecasts for the 20-year planning horizon indicate a growth in traffic on Shiloh Road. As indicated in the EA, by 2027, traffic volumes on Shiloh Road, north of Zoo Drive, are predicted to increase between 26% and 54% over the 2007 traffic volumes depending on the location in the corridor.
			2c. And I know that navigating two lanes of traffic and lane changes with anything but a minimum volume of traffic in order to effect a left turn can be a pretty dangerous business.	**2c.** Comment noted.
			2d. I would like to see more elucidation of the data on the safety of the roundabout versus a traffic light.	**2d.** Safety benefits of multi-lane roundabouts have been documented. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) presents statistics on intersections that were converted to multi-lane roundabouts indicating a 29% reduction of all accidents which included a 31% reduction in injury accidents, as well as 10% reduction in property damage accidents (Roundabouts: An Informational Guide, 2000). The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), in cooperation with FHWA recently conducted a study (soon to be published "final") through the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) identified as NCHRP Project 3-65 "Applying Roundabouts in the United States". This study did find that single-lane roundabouts have better safety performance than multi-lane roundabouts, but that multi-lane roundabouts still produce safety benefits compared to traffic signals or stop-controlled intersections.

No.	Name	Affiliation	Comment	Response
			2e. Then also, I represent the PTA of the Arrowhead Elementary School. And I would just like to get on record our concerns about the safety of the crosswalk which currently exists across Shiloh at Poly Drive. Acknowledging that one of our community values, I think, is developing independence and fitness in our school kids, and walking to school and biking to school is really, I think, an important part of that. It's involved in the concept of neighborhood schools which we all seem to be promoting. We just want to make sure that the safety of our crosswalk at Poly and Shiloh is kept as a high priority during the whole development. That account represents the northern end of the development area.	**2e.** The City installed advanced "bouncing ball" flashing beacons with radar-operated speed awareness signs north and south of Poly Drive which alert motorists to the existing pedestrian crosswalk located on Shiloh Road at the intersection with Poly Drive. The intersection already had an overhead sign, a marked crosswalk and a posted sign. The flashing beacons and speed awareness sign were installed in late January 2007 and are pre-timed for actuation during specific school-time periods. It would be determined in final design if the new pedestrian signal would be continued or replaced with something more suitable for the specific site. The existing underpass and Big Ditch Trail cross Shiloh Road at Colton Boulevard, approximately 300 m (1,000 ft) south of Poly Drive and also provide a connection to Arrowhead Elementary School. Currently, there is no pedestrian connection along Shiloh Road to this underpass. The Shiloh Road project would provide pedestrian connections on both sides of Shiloh Road from Poly Drive to the Colton Boulevard underpass, thereby improving access to this underpass and providing a crossing opportunity that is separated from motorized traffic.
3	Richard Schiltz	Individual	My concern is the pedestrians. I'm a disabled American veteran. I'm visually impaired and a couple of years ago I spent some time in a wheelchair. And the government gives us about four seconds a foot to cross a street. And the other thing is, if you're on a crosswalk, less than 20 percent of the cars yield to pedestrians. How do they figure one's gonna get across the street? And a car going 30 miles an hour covers 44 feet per second. So it's going to be a real, I guess, crap shoot to get across the street. With that in mind, thank you all.	**3.** According to Montana Annotated Code (MCA) 2005, Title 61 (Motor Vehicles), Chapter 8 (Traffic Regulation), Part 5 (Pedestrian Traffic) "except as provided in subsection (1)(b), when traffic control signals are not in place or not in operation, the operator of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way, slowing down or stopping if necessary, to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within a marked

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				crosswalk or within an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, but a pedestrian may not suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle that is so close that it is impossible for the operator to yield. This provision does not apply under the conditions provided in 61-8-503(2)." This project would implement appropriate design features for compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In accordance with ADA requirements, the hearing impaired would be provided with visual aids, including marked crosswalks, and appropriate signage. Visually impaired pedestrians would be provided with orientation aids, such as truncated domes on the ADA ramps, and possibly landscaping, to assist in the reasonably safe orientation and crossing of the accessible route provided at the roundabouts. It is anticipated that the roundabouts on Shiloh Road would have an "Advisory" (yellow warning sign) speed of 20 mph. However, a vehicle's actual speed may be different.
4	Mike Cucciardi	Individual	Thank you. Mike Cucciardi again, 626 South 38 Street West, Unit 48, Ponderosa Town Homes Association. **4a.** I was on city council a lot of years ago, and there was a study done that crosswalks by themselves actually are not as safe as the lights are. Children that use a crosswalk have a false sense of security in that they look down between the lines and they walk. Sometimes might even be safer if there wasn't a crosswalk. I wanted to bring that up and ask if that is still a valid point, because this lady does have a concern and I think it does need to be answered.	**4a.** Yielding of vehicles for a pedestrian at non-signalized crosswalks does rely on a calculated decision by the pedestrian on when to cross and the adherence of the motorist to the law that requires the motorist to yield (please see comment/response #3). However, a signalized intersection can also provide the pedestrian with a false sense of security, since red light running can occur or right-turn-on-red vehicles can fail to yield to pedestrians. Although a pedestrian may be more attentive crossing the street when there is no crosswalk, a driver's awareness is improved if there is a marked crosswalk. Marked crosswalks with

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				appropriate signage bring the driver's attention to the potential for a pedestrian or cyclist.
			4b. As far as the noise mitigation, I understand if you can cover the tires with a solid fencing or berm of some sort that, in fact, you don't have to go up above the top of the cars or the trucks, but just covering the tires would lower the noise.	**4b.** MDT policy states that noise abatement in the form of berms or barriers must be considered reasonable and feasible to be incorporated into the project. "Feasibility" deals with the constructability of the abatement. Barriers cannot be designed to eliminate traffic noise completely. However, a 6-decibel (dBA) reduction in noise is considered noticeable. MDT policy states that a minimum 6-dBA reduction in noise is required for abatement to be considered effective. Generally, to be effective, a noise barrier or berm must be continuous, with no breaks for cross streets or driveways, and it must break the line of sight between the receivers and the noise source, which in this case would be Shiloh Road. "Reasonableness" deals with more subjective criteria, such as the public's desires for abatement, cost of abatement and number of receivers benefited, overall noise levels and the increase in noise, timing of development, and whether the City/County planners consider traffic noise in developments next to busy roadways. One way to quantify the "reasonableness" of abatement is to calculate its cost-effectiveness index (CEI). Generally, MDT considers a CEI of $4200 or less a reasonable cost. MDT has recently revisited the Shiloh Road noise model to review the underlying noise model assumptions and to account for design evolution that has occurred since the last model runs. Please see Section 1.3, Public Hearing and Comments, of the FONSI for a discussion of the results of refined noise model analysis between Olympic Boulevard and Decathlon Parkway, which includes the Ponderosa Townhomes.

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			4c. I also am worried about pedestrians and the handicapped. It's like the blind leading the blind. I had an elderly lady going across King Avenue. By the time both of us got about halfway across the second section, the light was already turning red.	**4c.** Currently King Avenue doesn't have a pedestrian phase light which would provide a longer crossing time for pedestrians. Unlike signalized intersections, the design of roundabouts for Shiloh Road would provide a pedestrian refuge area in the raised median that separates opposing lanes of traffic. This would enable pedestrians to focus on crossing half of the roadway (one direction of traffic) at a time.
			4d. I also think the roundabouts would, in fact, lower the noise level where we are because of things like jake-braking by some of the large vehicles. When they come to a stop sign, they begin to jake-brake rather than use their brakes, and the noise at one or two o'clock in the morning is very loud.	**4d.** City of Billings, Yellowstone County and MDT cannot restrict use of engine brakes. According to state law (MCA 61-9-321), "A commercial motor vehicle equipped with an engine compression brake device must be equipped with a muffler in good working condition to prevent excessive noise. An operator of a commercial motor vehicle that has an engine compression brake device with a factory-installed muffler or an equivalent after-market muffler may not be prohibited from using the engine compression brake device."
			4e. Also, when cars start and stop, or when they start again from a light, they would make more noise than if they just slowed down and regained some speed. Thank you.	**4e.** Yes, it is true that vehicle noise levels increase for stopping and starting at a traffic light.
5	Les Keebler	Individual	**5a.** I don't have an axe to grind, but I only have some design questions about capacity. The questions have already been partially answered, that apparently this is a 20-year design life. And I hope it is. We in Billings too often are burdened with streets that are under-designed the day they are opened. And so at this plan, I would like to kind of know what is the potential for growth. I visualize these might need to be six or eight lanes 20 years down the line.	**5a.** Yes, the project has been designed for a 20-year planning horizon. The 20-year traffic projections considered the City of Billings and Yellowstone County growth projections as well as proposed development in the area. Based on these projections, a four-lane roadway was sufficient. A six- or eight-lane roadway was not warranted. MDT and FHWA do not construct facilities that are not warranted within the 20-year design life because the traffic benefits are not sufficient to justify the additional cost.

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			5b. It looks like this could be a good design as far as potential for widening or whatever. I'm not sure what roundabouts will do for that potential. If there is much more traffic, wider lanes coming into a roundabout, can they handle it? Maybe it can, maybe it's the best way to do it. I'm just not sure.	**5b.** The roundabouts as currently proposed actually have been analyzed in detail and most of them have substantial extra capacity for traffic volumes above and beyond those projected for the year 2027. If volumes on Shiloh Road or the sidestreets grow well beyond projections, improvements could be required for the roadway and at the intersections. If needed, right-turn slip-lanes can be added to roundabouts, lane-use can be adjusted and other measures to improve capacity at the intersections could be investigated before making improvements.
6	Bill Cole	Attorney representing Ed and Gloria Horab	Bill Cole (ph), 3733 Tommy Armour, representing Ed and Gloria Horab. **6a.** My first question is, it's my understanding that these questions will be answered in writing, correct? I'm going to submit, if I can to you guys, written copies of those questions. Even if I don't touch on them all on these comments-slash-questions, if you could refer to the written version so you can answer what is written there. The Horabs, as I said earlier, live extremely close to the eastern edge of the pavement south of Olympic -- or between Olympic and Decathlon. **6b.** The first question is: How will the likely -- or what will the location of the roadway be relative to the existing location? Right now I think they are only about 40 feet away. Specifically, is the pavement and the roadway going to get closer than it already is? **6c.** Related to that, what kind of considerations have been given to mitigating noise impacts, division [sic] (vision) impacts, things like that? In particular, an earthen berm.	**6a.** Responses to the verbal questions/ comments provided by Bill Cole (representing Ed and Gloria Horab) during the Public Hearing are provided as part of comment/response #6. The comments/questions submitted by Bill Cole as part of the formal Public Hearing transcript are provided in comment/response #48. **6b.** For the proposed design, the pavement and roadway would be closer to the townhomes than it is today. The townhomes are located behind an existing fence, which is approximately 14.1 m (46.3 ft) from the edge of the asphalt. The distance from the east side of the proposed roadway, as measured from the right-shoulder stripe to the existing fence is approximately 11.8 m (38.7 ft). This distance may vary based on final design. **6c.** Please see comment/response #4b regarding MDT's noise abatement policy. In addition, MDT has recently revisited the Shiloh

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				Road noise model to review the underlying model assumptions and to account for design evolution that has occurred since the last model runs. Please see Section 1.3, Public Hearing and Comments, of the FONSI for a discussion of the results of refined model analysis. Based on this revised analysis, constructing a barrier is not reasonable mitigation at the Ponderosa Townhomes because the cost effectiveness criterion would be exceeded. During final design, if costs are found to be more reasonable, noise abatement will be reassessed for this location. Constructing an earthen berm instead of a barrier at this location would require additional right-of-way and additional costs associated with right-of-way acquisition. Therefore, an earthen berm would also not meet the reasonableness criteria because the calculated value would exceed the reasonable cost-effectiveness criterion. As described in the EA, no mitigation for visual impacts of the roadway would be required as part of this project.
			6d. The next question relates to the Shiloh Drain and, specifically, how does the location of the Shiloh Drain impact the ability to move the location of the road westward away from the structures that are already very close on the east side?	**6d.** The Shiloh Drain does affect the ability to move the road westward. Filling and piping the drain would be cost prohibitive and could potentially increase flood risks. However, MDT has analyzed and is pursuing shifting the roadway approximately 3.75 m (12.3 ft) to the west from approximately 152-305 m (500-1,000 ft) north of King Avenue to Monad Road. This would provide additional separation between the roadway and townhomes, while still providing room for maintenance of the Shiloh Drain and meeting MDT design requirements for clear zone. The shift is based on design benefits and not based on any requirements for noise abatement.

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			6e. And related to that, I guess, is there a possibility of enclosing all or parts of the Shiloh Drain to allow movement of the road to the west? And obviously that would be an expensive proposition. My client had an additional question. Have all possible funding sources, federal and state, been pursued to look into enclosing all or parts of the Shiloh Drain?	**6e.** Burying the Shiloh Drain is cost prohibitive and the City of Billings owns and operates the drain in this section and desires that it remain an open channel. In addition, filling in the Shiloh Drain would have an effect on future flood risks. The Shiloh Drain has a substantial amount of storage capacity in its current configuration. Filling the drain and providing similar storage capacity would not be a cost effective design feature. The project team is not aware of any funding requests that have been made, specific to enclosing the Shiloh Drain. The Shiloh Drain is part of the City of Billings stormwater system and provides for irrigation wastewater conveyance and would therefore also require the installation of appropriate conduit, which would be a substantial cost expenditure for this project.
			6f. Then also, are any -- is any of the Shiloh corridor now in a public parkway? I don't believe it is. But if it is, is any of that park plan available for moving the roadway to the west?	**6f.** Ann Ross Park is located west of Shiloh Drain between King Avenue and Monad Road. Also, St. Vincent Foundation has a master plan for the enhancement of the Shiloh Drain between Monad Road and King Avenue. Eliminating Ann Ross Park would not improve the ability to shift Shiloh Road to the west because Shiloh Drain would be impacted (please see comment/response #6d).
			6g. And then, lastly, if there were a reduction in the value of any of the impacted properties, has any arrangement for compensation been considered? And if so, what is it? And if not, why not? Thank you.	**6g.** As stated in the EA, acquisition of land, and improvements, for highway construction is governed by state and federal laws and regulations that are designed to protect both the landowners and the taxpaying public. Landowners affected are entitled to receive just compensation for land or improvements acquired and for depreciation in value of the remaining land due to the effects of highway

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				construction pursuant to Montana law. Acquisition will be accomplished in accordance with applicable laws; specifically, Title 60, Chapter 4 and Title 70, Chapter 30, Montana Code Annotated; and Title 42, USC, Chapter 61, "Uniform Relocation Assistance And Real Property Acquisition Policies For Federal And Federally Assisted Programs."
7	Mary Zrubek	Individual	**7a.** Mary Zrubek again. I came here with concerns and questions before the meeting, and I must say I'm leaving with even more. On page three of the MDT brochure it states: Modern roundabouts were selected over traffic signals because, for this corridor, roundabouts would provide slightly better level of service, slightly reduced corridor travel time, potentially greater reduction in crash rates and severity. **7b.** Now, you've heard from a couple of us tonight about the roundabouts that are being taken out in different states. And with the demonstration that was done at the Metra for the emergency vehicles, in my mind, I really have a question about the cost, the time, the effort and everything else that is involved if roundabouts are really a viable situation for 10-year, 20-year plan on down the line for Billings. Thank you.	**7a.** As stated in the brochure provided at the Public Hearing, based on analysis for this project, modern roundabouts were selected over traffic signals because, for this corridor, roundabouts would provide better level-of-service (LOS), reduced travel time, potentially greater reduction in crash rates and severity, and reduced right-of-way (ROW) acquisition requirements. **7b.** The Preferred Alternative with roundabouts also has a lower project cost than using traffic signals. The signals would occupy more space at several of the main intersections as a direct result of the need for auxiliary lanes and associated transitions. This would result in increased costs due to ROW acquisition requirements for the corridor and increased surfacing costs from additional asphalt, base gravel, and import material among other things. The selection of roundabouts as the Preferred Alternative required detailed study and analyses and FHWA, MDT, the City of Billings and Yellowstone County personnel involved with the project concluded that the roundabouts are the best solution for the major intersections on Shiloh Road.
8	John Clem	Individual	**8a.** According to the environmental assessment, pedestrian crossings are safer at lighted intersections. I just want to make that clear to the county commissioners, since they are the only ones that get elected in the group that has chosen roundabouts for you.	**8a.** Comment noted. As stated in the EA, street lighting would be provided at the eight roundabouts.

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			8b. Once the accidents happen, it's too late to decide that traffic signals instead of these roundabouts.	**8b.** Please see comment/response #2d regarding safety benefits of roundabouts versus signalized intersections.
			8c. I drive 50,000 miles a year across the United States, through Dallas, through Los Angeles, through Chicago. I never see any of these roundabouts. Three weeks ago, I ran into one in St. George, Utah. It's very confusing coming right off the interstate onto this roundabout. There was a gravel truck in there, a lot of tourists that didn't understand how they work.	**8c.** Comment noted.
			8d. I've been saying this since they started coming up with the idea. And I was a little confused, came to a complete stop before I got in there. Traffic backed up behind me. I can't imagine how it's going to be going through eight of these on the way to the airport and then getting to the airport and having that little darling that's going to be up at the airport intersection.	**8d.** The project will include a comprehensive signing and striping plan to clearly inform the driver of how to maneuver through the modern roundabout. MDT will incorporate a public information program describing roundabouts and their operations. This program would include a Web site providing basic information regarding roundabouts, including why MDT wants to utilize roundabouts and how pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists can safely maneuver through them. MDT's public information program may also include informational brochures to be placed at the Airport, Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center, local businesses, and area hotels. These measures will help to improve drivers' understanding of modern roundabouts and minimize confusion for drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts.
			8e. I don't think it's a coincidence the five they have planned in Red Lodge has a clinic at one end and a fire department at the other end. I just don't know how we got this far into the roundabouts without having some public comment about it. I haven't heard a single person get up here and say a positive thing about roundabouts, except a couple of people who wanted to tell us they have been to Europe and drove the roundabouts.	**8e.** According to the Downtown Red Lodge Assessment and Action Plan, a goal of the plan is for Red Lodge to work with MDT to consider development of a roundabout at the junction of Highways 212 and 78, and design the roundabout as an entry feature. In 2005 the Montana legislature approved House Joint Resolution 12, which encourages

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				construction of roundabouts instead of right angle intersections (see page 2-17 of the EA). In compliance with this resolution, and in response to community input, both roundabouts and signalized intersections were considered for Shiloh Road. MDT and FHWA hosted three public meetings during the development of the EA. During and since the first public meeting, MDT received over two hundred written comments and a petition. Public comment summaries for various issues are listed in Table 5.1 of the EA (see page 5-3 in Appendix C). Other public involvement and information activities included a Shiloh Road Corridor Project Advisory Committee which was formed to confirm transportation and design goals for the corridor; assist in developing a vision for the corridor; identify the range of transportation improvements to be studied; assist in the development, evaluation, and refinement of alternatives; and consult with and represent the corridor and community interests. In addition, stakeholder interviews were conducted to identify key project issues, and more than 30 small group meetings were held as necessary when developing the alternatives. FHWA in conjunction with MDT and the local agencies reviewed the alternatives evaluation in the Shiloh Road Corridor EA and considered public and agency input prior to selecting the preferred alternative for implementation.
			8f. Of course it's easy with people who have been driving in them all their life. Half of the 28,000 vehicles that are going to be on Shiloh Road have never seen a roundabout before -- when they meet you there, and it's going to be a wreck.	**8f.** Comment noted.

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9	Robert Erekson	Individual	**9a.** If any of you haven't tried roundabouts, you should go down to Idaho Falls and try theirs. They have got four or five of them on, I think it's called, 25th Street. It runs from south of Yukon all the way down to Straight Street all the way down to 17th Avenue South, part of Idaho Falls. There are four or five of them there. When I first ran into them I was totally taken aback. They are the worst things that have ever been thought up for traffic. It takes me roughly five to seven minutes longer to go from 17th Street to the highway going north than it used to. And the traffic isn't a bit better. In fact, it's worse. You really need to experience it.	**9a.** Comments noted.
			9b. And this idea that we have here to rip out our existing signals because they don't meet some 20-year basis, well, let's use these for 10 years and put in the new ones when we need them, instead of wasting all the money we already spent for traffic signals.	**9b.** The EA did not analyze future 10-year design traffic volumes. Twenty-year traffic design volumes were analyzed in the EA. Based on this analysis, the existing traffic signals on Shiloh Road do not provide sufficient capacity to meet future 20-year design traffic volumes, and require reconstruction with this project.
			9c. I understand there is some talk of taking the red lights out at Zimmerman Trail and Grand Avenue to help things out. There are not going to be any frontage roads. You're really taking your life in your hands if you're in a wheelchair or a bicycle or walking anywhere along there. And for people to say that they are safer, they are not.	**9c.** The City of Billings was contacted and indicated that there is no intention to remove the signal at the Zimmerman Trail/Grand Avenue intersection.
			9d. Anyway, that's about all I have to say about it. I talked to a lady when it first came up. I was up in the exercise room at St. Vincent's Hospital and I talked to a lady who had just come back from England. She said that is the worst experience she ever had in her life was the roundabouts in England. Of course, it was bad enough that they had to drive on the left side of the road, but then the roundabouts, she said, in three different occasions, they went around the roundabouts three times before they could get off.	**9d.** Comment noted.
			9e. Now, with the assessment that we have heard here, that we are going to have a lot more traffic on Shiloh Road in the next	**9e.** The regional traffic model and traffic projections for the proposed development in

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			20 years, how in the world are these roundabouts going to accommodate that traffic? It just isn't going to happen. If we don't get into a lot more accidents with that and the beauty they will put up by the airport, I will put in with you.	the corridor were used to predict the future traffic volumes for the year 2027. In addition to future development, the traffic projections for the Preferred Alternative assumed future construction of new major approaches for Broadwater Avenue (west approach), Howard Avenue (west approach), Monad Road (west approach), Zoo Drive (west approach), a future approach east of the JTL/County access, and others. The design for all the alternatives was developed to accommodate the traffic volumes predicted for year 2027.
10	Ms. Haman	Individual	**10a.** Well, I guess I will go against the group here. The first roundabout I was ever in was in Mexico City, and it scared me to death. And then I realized that it would have been worse if it hadn't been there. The second one I was in was in Spokane, Washington, and it was on a small street and it worked very, very well. The third one I was in was in New York City, and if it hadn't been a roundabout and had been a traffic control place in that area, which was Columbus Circle, I would still be there, because the traffic wouldn't move. **10b.** There is -- the more traffic you have, the more back-ups you're going to have at stop lights, even if they try to arrange the stop lights so that they are in rhythm. Because often times, you know, just going down Grand, they are out of rhythm. And I like the fact that roundabouts are a little quieter because we don't have all of these semis going through their gear changes. That's my comment. **10c.** Oh, I do have one more comment. When I look at these drawings and things, I am a little worried about where the cars go when emergency vehicles are coming down the street. I guess they are wide enough. About the emergency vehicles going through the roundabouts, they will have their sirens on, so obviously you will know they're there and you get out of their way.	**10a.** Comments noted. **10b.** Comments noted. **10c.** The roundabouts would be designed to accommodate WB-20LM size vehicles (tractor-single trailer combination that is approximately 67-feet from front axle to rear axle), and therefore could accommodate emergency vehicles. The geometric configurations of the roundabouts would include two lanes in the roundabout, allowing emergency vehicles to pass through the

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				roundabout side-by-side with a car. According to state law MCA 2005 61-8-346, "upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle making use of audible and visual signals meeting the requirements of 61-9-402 or of a police vehicle properly and lawfully making use of an audible signal only, the operator of every other vehicle shall yield the right-of-way and shall immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in that position until the authorized emergency vehicle or police vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer or highway patrol officer. Upon approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle or police vehicle that is displaying visible signals of flashing or rotating amber, blue, red, or green lights, the operator of the approaching vehicle shall: (a) reduce the vehicle's speed, proceed with caution, and, if possible considering safety and traffic conditions, move to a lane that is not adjacent to the lane in which the authorized emergency vehicle or police vehicle is located or move as far away from the authorized emergency vehicle or police vehicle as possible; or (b) if changing lanes is not possible or is determined to be unsafe, reduce the vehicle's speed, proceed with caution, and maintain a reduced speed, appropriate to the road and the conditions, through the area where the authorized emergency vehicle or police vehicle is stopped."
11	Kathy Aragon	Individual	**11a.** I'm also involved with kids biking and walking to school. My kids walk and bike to school. I would like to request that you put safe pedestrian crossings at all intersections, not just the eight ones that you mentioned to be considered there, because I do encourage kids to walk and bike to school.	**11a.** Please see comment/response #2e regarding the existing underpass and Big Ditch Trail that cross Shiloh Road at Colton Boulevard and the recently City-installed pedestrian warning system at Poly Drive.

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				This project proposes to install new pedestrian/bicycle crossings at the eight major intersections. In addition to the pedestrian improvements noted above, the project team is currently evaluating a recent request for a grade-separated crossing between Grand Avenue and Broadwater Avenue. The determination has not been made whether the project would incorporate a crossing at this location (please see comment/response #20).
			11b. If we were all walking and biking, we wouldn't be worried about the traffic. We found that our parents that drive their kids to school create 30 percent of the traffic. So we are creating our own problems, becoming more and more involved in getting in our cars when we could walk and bicycle those errands.	**11b.** Comment noted.
			11c. So I will get off the soapbox and ask if you will please incorporate pedestrian and bicycle crossings. I think as -- I looked at a lot of research, and it's the traffic that is going fast that is killing pedestrians and bicyclists.	**11c.** Please see comment/response #11a regarding pedestrian and bicycle crossings.
			11d. So if what the Department of Transportation or the city is doing to slow down the traffic really makes it safer for our kids and our families and the elderly and anybody else trying to walk or bicycle across the street, I'm all for it.	**11d.** Comment noted.
			11e. So if we slow down the traffic somehow and hopefully get the flow to be greater while the traffic speed is less, I think we accomplish some good things for the city. So I would like you to incorporate those crossings, please.	**11e.** Comment noted.
12	Dan Kuck	Individual	I don't understand eight of them. It's going to be a new shock to drivers. Central and Shiloh for years is a four-way stop. I don't want to go farther than that. They had a hard time with the stop sign, let alone something new and multiplying it by eight times.	**12.** The existing intersection at Central Avenue would not function adequately under future traffic volumes (please see comment/response #9b). Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts.

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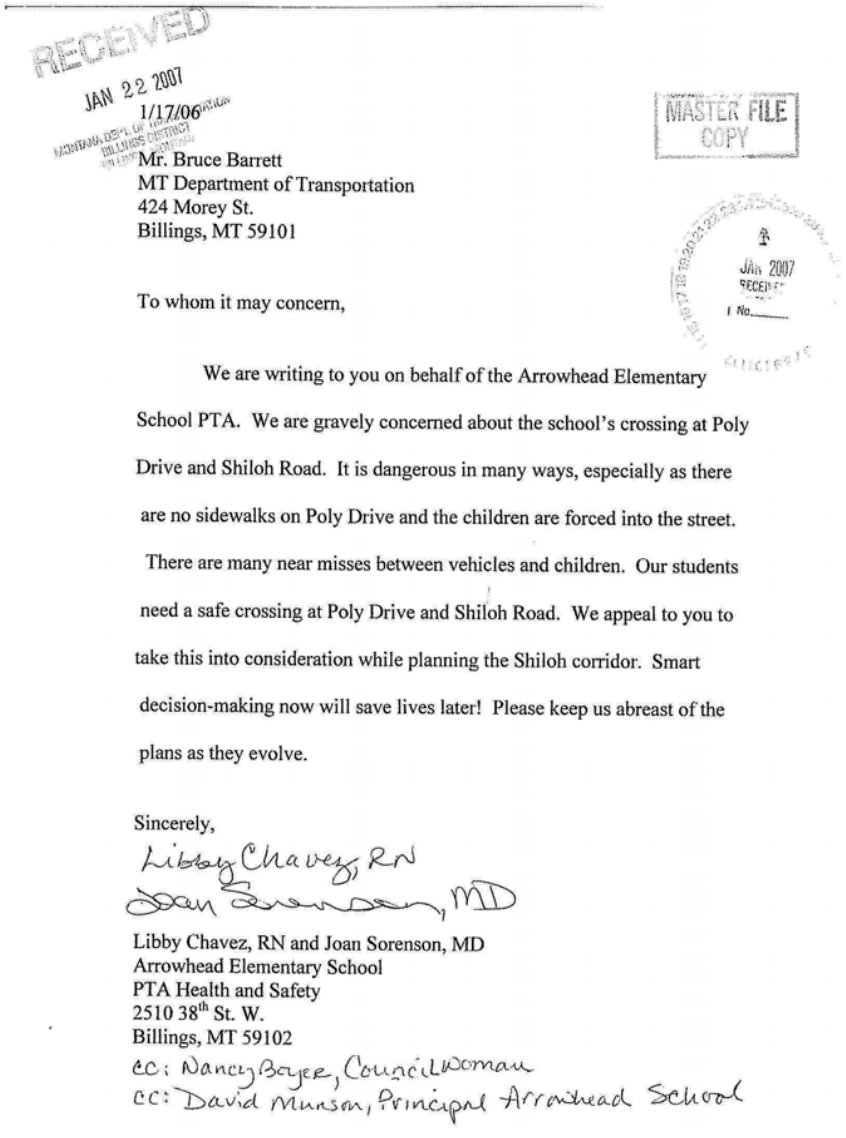
13	Robert Erekson	Individual	I would like to make one more comment. I would like to know why they are taking out all the roundabouts in Edmonton and New Jersey and other places? What is wrong with them, then? Why are we getting them when they are taking them out? That's my question. What is going on here?	**13.** Please see comment/response #1a regarding removal of circular-type intersections in other states and countries.
14	William Crandall	Individual	I don't know much about you guys as far as whether you live here or you don't. I just know that I drive this road every day. I'm a Pizza Hut delivery driver. I'm probably 40 times at least, in a week, on Shiloh. And whether they put in the roundabouts or the stop signs, anything is better than nothing. Because as it is, it's already hard enough.	**14.** Comment noted.
15	Al Littler	Individual	**15a.** The concept of the corridor in 20 years from now makes a great deal of sense. I do not want to travel north and south on 24th Street West. I don't want to travel east and west on Grand Avenue. Commercial right up to the sidewalk, traffic lights, congested. It's a mess. The concept here on the West End was to have a corridor that you could move traffic. You're going to have shopping centers, medical facilities. There will be lots of things adjacent to the corridor. So we are so critical of the corridor when, in fact, we are losing the concept. **15b.** This is a new concept to move a lot of traffic on the West End, which we can't do now. These farm-to-market roads are not going to handle it. I live on one. My wife and I won't walk on 48th anymore because of the traffic. As a matter of fact, we ran over one guy right out by my driveway, killed him. We ran over him twice as a matter of fact. First guy hit him, didn't stop, the second guy hit him. So I'm telling you the concept makes sense. I think we have to not lose sight of that.	**15a.** Comment noted. **15b.** Comment noted.

Comment 16	Response
 Mr. Bruce Barrett MT Department of Transportation 424 Morey St. Billings, MT 59101 To whom it may concern, We are writing to you on behalf of the Arrowhead Elementary School PTA. We are gravely concerned about the school's crossing at Poly Drive and Shiloh Road. It is dangerous in many ways, especially as there are no sidewalks on Poly Drive and the children are forced into the street. There are many near misses between vehicles and children. Our students need a safe crossing at Poly Drive and Shiloh Road. We appeal to you to take this into consideration while planning the Shiloh corridor. Smart decision-making now will save lives later! Please keep us abreast of the plans as they evolve. Sincerely, Libby Chavez, RN Joan Sorenson, MD Libby Chavez, RN and Joan Sorenson, MD Arrowhead Elementary School PTA Health and Safety 2510 38th St. W. Billings, MT 59102 cc: Nancy Bayer, Councilwoman cc: David Munson, Principal Arrowhead School	**16.** Please see comment/response #2e regarding access improvements to the existing underpass at Colton Boulevard and the pedestrian crossing at Poly Drive and Shiloh Road. During final design, MDT will coordinate with Arrowhead Elementary School on this issue.

Comment 17	Response
	**17.** Existing bridges in the project corridor would be checked for bats prior to the start of construction. If bats are found on existing bridges, the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) Native Species Specialist at the Billings office will be contacted for further input. Language regarding mitigation for bats will be added to Section 2.0 Clarifications to the EA in the FONSI.

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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings MT 59105

January 24, 2007

Jean A. Riley, P.E.
Montana Department of Transportation
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Re: Shiloh Road Corridor EA Comments

Jean:

Montana FWP concurs with the wildlife impacts and mitigative measures as addressed in the EA. One additional suggestion is to check existing bridges for bat activity. If bats are found on any of the existing bridges, please contact the FWP Native Species Specialist at the Billings office (Allison Puchniak Begley, 247-2966) for further input.

Thank you for giving FWP the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

Ray Mulé

Ray Mulé
Region 5 Wildlife Program Manager

Comment 18	Response

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February 1, 2007

Jean A. Riley, PE
MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620

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Ms. Riley,

The homeowners that live the closest to Shiloh Road would be our townhouse building. We live in unit #47 which is the second unit in from Shiloh Road.

18a. We stick out like a sore thumb compared to any other structures between Grand Avenue and King Avenue. We don't know how this happened. Was a variance given to complete this townhouse or is this just a coincidence. Whatever the case, its water under the bridge.

Regardless of what happened lets work together and turn this sore thumb into a plus for us and your project. One way to accomplish this is to push the new Shiloh Road to the west and use some of that raw land across from us. This way we can save the ground (approx. 40 feet) between us and the shoulder of the old Shiloh Road. Build a beautiful landscaped berm between Olympic and Decathlon. This would not only compliment the Ponderosa townhouse building but in my opinion compliment your project. The townhouses behind us would also benefit from this berm.

18b.

18c.

We can't imagine having the traffic any closer than what it is now. The traffic noise would be unbearable. If you are concerned about your liability, place some big rocks on top of the berm and space those 10, 15, or 20 feet apart and some trees in between.

18d.

By moving the new Shiloh Road to the west, would it be possible to keep the old Shiloh Road in tact and run the sewer and water lines under the new lanes. Hopefully this would drop the cost of the project substantially. Another big improvement for this project would be to run the drainage channel underground. From what we understand the funding isn't available to complete this costly improvement. Can you do this underground channel in sections? For example, can you complete one section at a time? You

18e.

18a. Please consult with the City of Billings/Yellowstone County regarding the development approval process of your townhome.

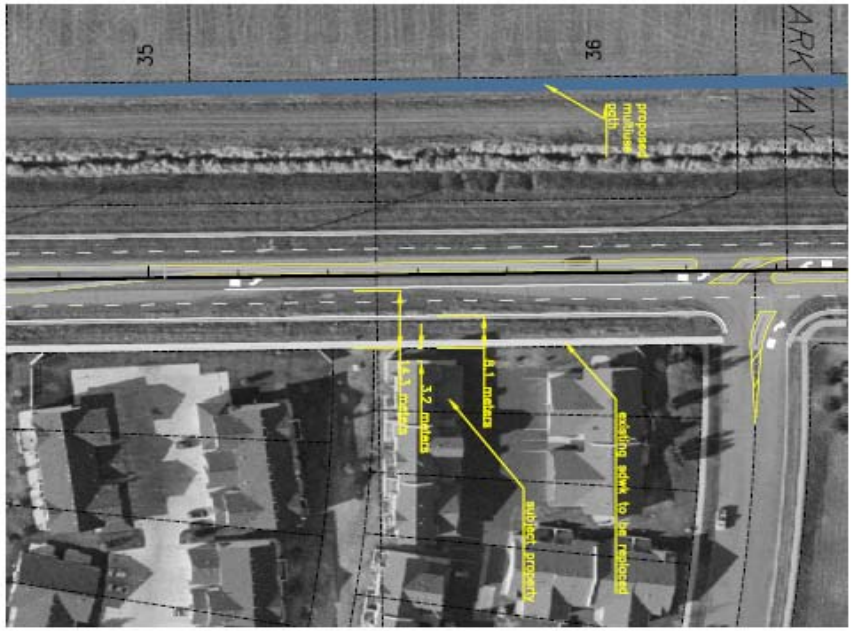
18b. Please see comment/response #6d regarding shifting the roadway to the west. Shifting the road to the west would require filling and piping the Shiloh Drain which would be cost prohibitive and could potentially increase flood risks.

18c. Please see comment/response #6c regarding constructing an earthen berm. Landscaping treatments will be assessed during final design.

18d. Please see comment/response #4b regarding MDT's noise abatement policy and comment/response #6c regarding noise abatement at this location. The proposed landscaping anticipated for Shiloh Road is unknown and would be determined during final design, and in consultation with the City of Billings.

18e. Existing Shiloh Road surfacing is inadequate for future traffic levels; therefore the road requires complete reconstruction north of Hesper Road. A 12-inch high pressure gas main exists along the west edge of the existing Shiloh Road roadway west of the Ponderosa Townhomes and is buried shallow. Due to the presence of the high pressure and medium pressure gas mains, this project does not propose to lower the proposed roadway noticeably in locations where the gas mains exist because the gas companies require a 30-36" clearance from top of proposed surface to top of gas main.

Comment 18 (cont.)	Response
would have to determine the location of that section to be completed first. How about doing a section between King Avenue and Central Avenue or do half the distance between the two streets and when more funding is available, eventually have the entire channel underground. By going underground with the water channel you can probably add more footage to the berm--that would be a real plus for us. **18f.** We gave Kirk Spalding a rough sketch, which is similar to the road design over the new golf course road--that road looks great and the traffic moves smoothly. Hopefully Kirk can make our sketch more presentable and understandable. **18g.** Gloria and I would like to wish you good luck with this project. Make it a showcase for Billings and the State of Montana. By the way Kirk says the roundabouts work great in Colorado--so why wouldn't they work in Billings. By looking at your brochure, the design looks great. We hope you stay with that idea, we like it. **18h.** Sincerely, Ed and Gloria Horab	**18f.** Please see comment/response #6e regarding burying the Shiloh Drain. **18g.** The sketch was studied and a 40-50' shift of the roadway to the west is unfeasible due to impacts to the Shiloh Drain (please see comment/response #6d). However, MDT is pursuing shifting the roadway west from north of King Avenue to Monad Road (please see comment #6d). The proposed median landscaping anticipated for Shiloh Road is unknown and would be determined during final design, and in consultation with the City of Billings. **18h.** Comment noted.

Comment 18 (cont.)	Response
	

Comment 19	Response
RECEIVED JAN 31 2007 ENVIRONMENTAL Richard H. Miller 3949 Teal Street Billings, Montana 59102 January 28, 2007 Jean A. Riley, PE Environmental Services Bureau Chief Montana Department of Transportation P.O. Box 201001 Helena, Montana 59620-1001 MASTER FILE COPY Re: Shiloh Road Corridor Dear Ms. Riley: I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment and Programmatic Section 4 (f) Evaluations and have some questions that I would liked addressed as I am not able to attend the next public meeting. **19a.** I have lived just off of Shiloh Road since moving into Shiloh Village Mobile Home Park in 1983. I have seen the area develop from what was once productive farmland into a hodgepodge of residential and commercial development that has greatly increased automobile and heavy truck traffic. I have seen numerous traffic accidents, some with fatalities, along Shiloh Road. Recently, after the last snow storm, there were numerous vehicle slide offs on the east side of Shiloh Road and had not there been a couple of irrigation ditches present, some of these vehicles would have come dangerously close to the homes that border the roadway. **19b.** I do not see within the Assessment any provision that addresses the problem of vehicles being prevented from sliding off of the roadway and into our homes. The roadway is to be widened and several of the existing features that prevent vehicles from hitting homes are proposed to be eliminated. Specifically, what measures will be taken to protect the home owners along Shiloh Road from errant drivers? I see no provisions for retaining walls, guardrail, etc., that would afford some protection to the homeowner's assets. **19c.** In the past five years, traffic has increased significantly and because of the increases, the noise level has increased. We are assaulted by the noise, i.e., "Jake" Brakes and the whine of turbo charged diesels trucks making connections between I-90/Zoo Drive Interchange and State Highway 3 via Zimmermann Trail. This truck traffic runs 24/7. Additionally, the development of the west end of Billings has brought increases of heavy truck traffic from two major sand and gravel suppliers that not only increases the noise levels but also adds to air pollution by the increase of particulate levels from diesel engine fumes and uncovered loads of road building materials. Your assessment provides for no noise abatement measures at the present time which I believe is a tragic mistake in the planning of this project. The only proposal for noise abatement is for "planned or	**19a.** Comment noted. **19b.** This project would construct recoverable slopes (slopes which can be safely traversed and upon which an errant motorist has a reasonable opportunity to stop and return to the roadway) within required limits, according to MDT standards and AASHTO guidelines. Where recoverable slopes are not provided or where roadside hazards are present, MDT would evaluate whether guardrail or other methods are necessary to protect motorists and adjacent property. **19c.** Please see comment/response #4d regarding regulation of jake brakes. **19d.** The LOS at the intersections for the project are predicted to operate at an overall LOS C or better during the average weekday pm peak hour, which would be an improvement over the no-action conditions. Therefore, the localized impacts on air quality, particularly carbon monoxide (CO), from vehicle emissions would be an improvement over no action because less congestion would result in reduced vehicle emissions. In addition, there have been studies conducted on the effect that different traffic flows have on emissions at an intersection. Of the studies that reported quantitative results, roundabouts reduced vehicle emissions for hydrocarbons (HC) in 5 studies by an average of 33%, CO in 6 studies by an average of 36%, and nitric oxides (NOx) in 6 studies by an average of 21% (Wayne Elson, *Modern Roundabouts: An Air Quality Measure?*, United States Environmental Protection Agency). Regulating covering of "open loads" is not within MDT's jurisdiction. All vehicles carrying or towing loads are required to follow City of Billings' regulations regarding "secured" loads (see City of

Comment 19 (cont.)	Response
19e. proposed developments". My question is what about those of us that are already here that will find our quality of life further degraded by increased noise levels from traffic? **19f.** In 2005, a project was undertaken by owner of Shiloh Village Mobile Home Park that eliminated a stand of trees that bordered Shiloh Road that acted as a wind break and actually abated some of the noise on Shiloh Road. Under the Assessment, some of the private parkland and "approximately 260 mature trees" will be eliminated from the corridor. Many of these trees have become homes to various song birds and birds of prey. Additionally, trees have been proven to aid in the reduction of harmful "greenhouse" gasses and provide some reduction in noise levels along the corridor. What is MDOT going to do to address the issue of destroying mature trees and what is MDOT going to do to replace those trees? Thank you for allowing me the time to address some of my concerns. Sincerely yours, Richard H. Miller	Billings Municipal Code [Sec. 21-217. Load security]). During construction, contractors would be required to operate in compliance with these standards. **19e.** Please see comment/response #4b regarding MDT's noise abatement policy. In addition, MDT has recently revisited the Shiloh Road noise model to review the underlying model assumptions and to account for design evolution that has occurred since the last model runs. Please see Section 1.3, Public Hearing and Comments, of the FONSI for a discussion of the results of refined model analysis and project commitments on noise abatement. **19f.** During final design, impacts to trees would be minimized wherever possible. Also, as a result of MDT right-of-way negotiations and agreements with individual property owners, trees may be replaced. Landscaping for project would be determined during final design, and in consultation with the City of Billings.

Comment 20	Response

PETER YEGEN, JR., INC.

INSURANCE
REAL ESTATE
SURETY BONDS

"The Insurance Men"

ESTABLISHED 1919

211 NORTH 30TH STREET
BOX 959
ZIP 59103

BILLINGS, MONTANA

Bruce Barrett
Billings District Administrator
Montana Department of Transportation
425 Morey Street
Billings, MT 59101

February 2, 2007

RE: Shiloh Road

Dear Mr. Barrett,

Over the past number of months it has come to our attention that there is concern among the general public in our community about a perceived lack of safe bicycle and pedestrian traffic crossings along Shiloh Road. Owing to the round-a-bout alternative that has come forth and the idea that traffic along Shiloh Road will be in constant motion, this seems to be a very well grounded concern.

20a.

We understand that pedestrians and bicycles are intended to use the "safe harbor" practice of crossing at median locations, in which bikes and people cross half the street looking one way, pause at the mid-section, and then cross other half of the street looking the other way. We also understand that there is the possibility of pedestrian stop lights between round-a-bouts. We wonder, however, if there might be a better way to address this concern. Our notion is based upon professional research which finds that pedestrian "safe harbor" crossings remain dangerous in the best of circumstances and that pedestrian traffic light alternatives have not been particularly effective in other communities in streets other than those demanding quite slow traffic speeds. Additionally, it seems that pedestrian stop lights do not fit well into the notion that Shiloh Road should not mix signals with round-a-bouts, creating confusion in the minds of both drivers and pedestrians.

20b.

20c.

To this end, we have enclosed a draft of a possible solution to this problem. This draft includes the creation of a below grade passageway through with bicycles and pedestrians could safely cross Shiloh Road and conveniently connect to the Heritage Trail system, thus enhancing the connectivity of the east and west sides of Shiloh Road. We have

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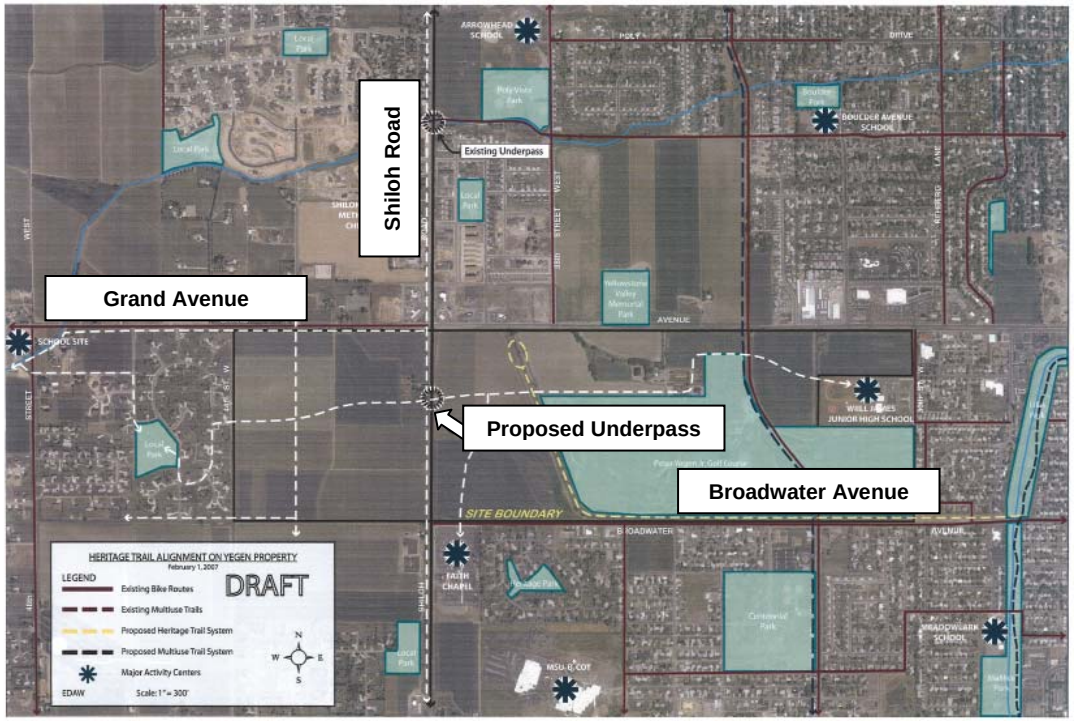
20a. Yes, the design of the roundabouts incorporates a pedestrian refuge area in the raised median that separates opposing lanes of traffic.

20b. At the current time, there are no plans in the project design for mid-block pedestrian signals.

20c. City of Billings, Yellowstone County, and MDT staff recommended that uniform intersection treatments (i.e., traffic signals or roundabouts) be implemented for safety reasons. Drivers expect uniform treatment of intersections. Interspersing roundabouts and traffic signals could create driver confusion and adversely affect safety. As a result, interspersing roundabouts and signalized intersections was eliminated from further consideration.

Comment 20 (cont.)	Response
20d. further indicated on this draft a possible design to demonstrate how this connector relates to the general neighborhood and the community at large through the extension of the Heritage Trail system, much of which is laid out by the City of Billings but not yet designed. Our hope is that this notion might facilitate the goals of the Heritage Trail system, making the west end of Billings a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly area and allowing Shiloh Road to be the amenity as it was intended rather than an east-west barrier for non-vehicular traffic. We are very excited about the possibility of working on this situation with you and hope we might be able to meet and further discuss this possibility. Sincerely, Charlie Yegen Charlie Yegen	**20d.** MDT will evaluate and work with the landowner and the City of Billings during final design regarding their proposed pedestrian/bicycle underpass to determine if it is feasible or desirable.

Comment 20 (Cont.)	Response
	.

Comment 21	Response
PLANNING & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT "Serving Billings, Broadview and Yellowstone County" 510 North Broadway, 4th Floor Billings, Montana 59101 Fax: (406) 657-8327 Phone: (406) 657-8246 Email: PlanCSD@ci.billings.mt.us FEB 09 2007 Montana Dept. of Transportation Billings District Billings, Montana FILE COPY February 8, 2007 Bruce Barrett, District Administrator Montana Department of Transportation PO Box 20437 Billings, MT 59104 Re: Shiloh Road Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing Dear Bruce; It is our understanding that the Yegen family is contemplating development of their properties on either side of Shiloh Road. The development concept includes a subgrade pedestrian/bicycle crossing somewhere between Grand Avenue and Broadwater Avenue. While the precise location and configuration is unknown, we support the concept of this crossing. The proposed crossing is consistent with the Heritage Trail Plan, our non-motorized transportation plan and satisfies a need to provide a non-motorized connection across Shiloh Road in this proximity. The City of Billings appreciates the Yegen's considering public pedestrian facilities in their development design and looks forward to working with them in the future. Sincerely, For Candi Beaudry, AICP Director cc: Tina Volek, City Administrator Dave Mumford, Public Works Director Charlie Yegen, Yegen Insurance	**21.** Please see comment/response #20d regarding proposed pedestrian/bicycle underpass of Shiloh Road between Broadwater Avenue and Grand Avenue.

Comment 22	Response
February 7, 2007 FEB 2007 Jean Riley, P.E. MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief 2701 Prospect Avenue P.O. Box 201001 Helena, MT 59260-1001 Cc: Mr. Spaulding Engineering Inc. Billings, MT Name: Mike Cucciardi Address: 626 S. 38th St. W. #48 City, St.: Billings, MT 59102 Date of Mtng. 2/06/2007 Comments: As follows: THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK! Mike 22a.	**22a.** Comment noted.

Comment 22 (cont.)	Response

SHILOH ROAD PROJECT QUESTIONS:

The following are my questions as per your request:

22b. 1] Will the Ponderosa Town Home Association owners be assessed any money for the project unless it is something over and above the final plan?

22c. 2] Since cross walk safety was one of the main problem areas with the citizenry, could you suggest a paid alternative such as over or under walkways?

22d. 3] How will you deal with the confusion factor; that is, for those especially from out of town who now can't even negotiate King Ave., do you have any plans for education.

22e. 4] Is there a maximum length for semi-tractor-trailers?

22f. 5] Since the Ponderosa Town Homes Association is one of the closest to the proposed roadway, can you guarantee to some degree that we will have sufficient buffering as in burms, trees, etc.? And, have the cost of said buffering be borne by Federal and other dollars, not our association as you previously discussed with me.

22g. 6] You had mentioned that you could lower the level of the road adjacent to our association when I last spoke with you. Now, with the gas main, how much lower can you go?

22h. 7] Say, over the next fifteen years, will our units be safe from any unforeseen impacts such as right of way use, etc? Some have evidently heard that at some point some of our units would have to be lopped off. That doesn't make much sense to me, when like in the new road that cuts through Yegen golf course is not in a straight line. Can't we use some of the Ditch space to move the road west? I don't believe St. V's would really care if they knew the impact on our units.

22i.

22j. 8] Can you prove that the proposed round a bouts will not produce more accidents that traffic lights?

22k. 9] Can you also prove that there wouldn't be more backed up traffic with round a bouts than with traffic lights?

22l. 10] Do you suggest we stay with the plan of round a bouts at the intersections that dead-end, such as Broadwater? Are there plans to continue these streets in the near future?

22m. 11] Would you like me to stop asking you questions now? (a little humor never hurts!)

Thank you for this opportunity to ask you these questions. Good luck.

Mike Cucciardi

22b. At this time the only Special Improvement District (SID) would be for lighting.

22c. MDT has assessed the *Heritage Trail Plan* proposed grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle crossings at the proposed Hogan's Slough multi-use trail, the proposed primary bikeway at Monad Road, and the proposed secondary bikeway at Howard Avenue, which traverses the MSU Billings College of Technology campus. Based on analysis done in the EA they are not feasible. Please see comment/response #20d regarding a proposed pedestrian/bicycle underpass between Broadwater Avenue and Grand Avenue which will be analyzed during final design for feasibility and desirability.

22d. Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts.

22e. There is no vehicle length restriction on Shiloh Road. The roundabouts would be designed to accommodate WB-20LM size vehicles (tractor-single trailer combination that is approximately 67-feet from front axle to rear axle). Trucks that are longer than the WB-20LM may need to occupy both travel lanes and the truck apron (the mountable portion of the central island in a roundabout that is adjacent to the circulatory roadway) in the roundabout, and likely both travel lanes on the entry and exit approaches. It should be noted that tractor/trailers longer than 67' (single tractor/trailer and not multiple trailers in combination) will need to have a permit issued by MDT's Motor Carrier Services (MCS) Division.

22f. Please see comment/response #4b regarding MDT's noise abatement policy and comment/response #6c, #18c, and #18d regarding constructing an earthen berm. The landscaping for Shiloh Road would be determined

Comment 22 (cont.)	Response
	during final design, and in consultation with the City of Billings. It is the intent of this project to perpetuate the existing vinyl fence along the west side of the Ponderosa Townhomes and keep construction activities west of the fence. It would be determined during final design if this is possible. **22g.** Please see comment/response #18e regarding lowering the roadway at the Ponderosa Townhomes. **22h.** The project right-of-way in this location would be minimized, as much as practicable. At this time, the existing right-of-way limit is anticipated to be perpetuated along the Ponderosa Townhomes development, with the potential for minor right-of-way required at the Decathlon Road and Olympic Boulevard intersections with Shiloh Road. The specific right-of-way requirement would be determined during final design. **22i.** Please see comment/response #6d regarding shifting the roadway to the west. **22j.** Please see comment/response #2d regarding roundabout safety statistics. **22k.** Traffic analysis for this project indicates that, even during average weekday peak operating conditions (7:30 to 8:30 am and 4:30 to 5:30 pm) there would be little to no traffic backed up at the roundabouts through the design year of 2027. Calculated maximum vehicle queues are typically less than five vehicles during the period analyzed (Engineering, Inc., October 2006. *Traffic Report Technical Memorandum*). **22l.** Monad Road, Broadwater Avenue and the JTL/County access are to be constructed initially as three-legged intersections. They are designed, however, to accommodate a fourth leg that would

Comment 22 (cont.)	Response
	be constructed by others in the future. The fourth leg of Monad Road is already platted and construction is anticipated to occur in a time frame similar to construction of Shiloh Road. Development is also anticipated in the near future opposite of the existing Broadwater Avenue and JTL/County access based on discussions with landowners. **22m.** Comment noted.

Comment 23	Response
RECEIVED FEB – 9 2007 ENVIRONMENTAL Shiloh Road Corridor Comments February 7, 2007 My wife and I have lived in Billings for more than 40 years, and at our present location at 66th and Grand Ave, west of the Shiloh Road project, for more than 30 years. We use Grand, Rimrock, Central and King Avenues, to get back and forth to Billings, depending on our destination. We have no financial interests in the Shiloh Corridor project, other than as taxpayers, but are concerned about our ability to travel from our home into Billings. **23a.** We strongly support the need to upgrade and improve Shiloh Road, but can't comprehend how the estimated cost has now risen to $40 million. It will likely be $50 million or more before it is actually finished. It seems to me that this project was originally supposed to cost $10 or $20 million. **23b.** I have very strong objections to the use of Roundabouts at intersections. These are an experimental idea, and no one knows if they will work. I believe that Roundabouts were selected on the basis of Political Correctness rather than sound engineering. In other words this is a mistake whose time has come! I can foresee millions of more dollars being spent in the future to replace the Roundabouts with conventional traffic signals. **23c.** I understand that Roundabouts can work on roads with light traffic. Traffic is already heavy on Shiloh Road, Grand Ave, Central Ave, Broadwater Ave, and King Ave, and will undoubtedly be much heavier in the future. Also, for Roundabouts to work drivers would need to use their turn signals properly, and to yield to other traffic already in the Roundabout. **23d.** I have driven more than 2 million miles in my lifetime, and for 30 years made my living in a traveling job. I have observed that very few Billings drivers use their turn signals correctly. Many drivers don't use them at all, and many others wait until after they have started to turn to put them on. The word "yield" doesn't exist in the vocabulary of many Billings drivers. In Billings, if you signal that you need to change lanes, the driver behind you in the other lane will more likely than not speed up to cut you off. **23e.** Timid or confused drivers will come to a dead stop when they reach the Roundabout instead of blending into traffic flow as they are supposed to. Aggressive drivers, on the other hand, will bully their way through regardless of who has the right of way.	**23a.** The original project cost of $20 million was only a construction cost. The approximate estimate of $40 million includes all costs associated with the project from conception to end of construction. This includes construction costs, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocations, consultant fees, inflation consideration, development of the environmental document, and MDT administrative costs among others. In addition, the price of construction-related items such as steel, concrete and petroleum products have risen substantially since the conception of this project. **23b.** Please see comment/response #7a regarding the selection of modern roundabouts. **23c.** The roundabouts would be designed to accommodate the anticipated increase in traffic through the design year of 2027. For proper function and for optimal safety performance motorists entering the roundabout do need to yield to circulating traffic and enter when there is a safe gap in the circulating traffic. Motorists using turn signals are helpful, but not necessary if the other principals and rules of the roundabouts are followed. **23d.** Comment noted. **23e.** Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts.

Comment 23 (cont.)	Response
IN SUMMARY: **23f.** (1) I can't conceive that anyone would recommend removing the existing traffic signals at Shiloh and Grand. This intersection works very well, traffic flows well, and there is never a long wait for the light to change. Also, by leaving this intersection undisturbed people living west of Shiloh will have at least one reliable route open to travel to and from Billings. If Roundabouts prove to be as wonderful as predicted this intersection could be converted to Roundabout design at a later date. **23g.** (2) Local road contractors do not have a good track record for completing projects in a reasonable time frame. In recent years King Ave was closed for more than a year simply to install utilities across it. This is inexcusable. The intersection at Shiloh and Rimrock took more than a year to complete. Within recent years, I believe about 3 years ago, Rimrock, King and Grand were all closed at the same time for construction. This left only Central Ave as a means for travel into Billings without major detours. My point is, please have some consideration for people living west of Shiloh who need to travel into Billings on a regular basis. **23h.** (3) The engineers have stated that it takes less land to build a Roundabout than a conventional intersection. I believe it is terribly shortsighted to purchase less land than needed for standard intersections. When the Roundabouts have to be torn out and replaced, there will be millions of more dollars expended to purchase the additional land needed. 	**23f.** The Grand Avenue traffic signal does not provide sufficient capacity to meet future 20-year design traffic volumes, and requires reconstruction with this project. This project proposes a roundabout at this location to be consistent with the proposed construction of the other roundabouts in the corridor (please see comment/response #20c). **23g.** A construction traffic control plan would be developed according to MDT Standard Specifications to include construction phasing devised to maintain two lanes of traffic and uninterrupted side road access along the corridor to the greatest extent practicable. **23h.** MDT typically acquires ROW a short distance beyond the construction limits. The roundabouts are anticipated to function well through the design year of 2027 and additional ROW beyond that acquired for this project initially is not anticipated in proximity to the intersections within that design life. The King Avenue/Shiloh Road intersection would be constructed as a two-lane roundabout, although ROW would be acquired for the future expansion to a larger roundabout if traffic volumes reach anticipated levels.

Comment 24	Response

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RECEIVED
FEB 12 2007
ENVIRONMENTAL

Doug James
1570 Westridge Circle
Billings, MT 59102
655-2363

February 8, 2007

Jean Riley, P.E.
MDOT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Re: *Shiloh Road Environmental Assessment*

Dear Ms. Riley:

24a. I am writing to express my support and enthusiasm for the preferred alternative for the Shiloh Road Corridor.

24a. Comment noted.

24b. I reviewed the Environmental Assessment and attended the public hearing which was held in Billings on February 6, 2007. After reviewing the Environmental Assessment and listening to the comments and clarifications, I am convinced that the proposed alternative is the best option for Billings and for Montana.

24b. Comment noted.

24c. When the topic of roundabouts first came up several years ago, I was adamantly opposed to them. In fact, I wrote letters opposing the use of roundabouts on Shiloh Road. Subsequently, however, I had the opportunity to listen to the engineers and experts explain the benefits of roundabouts. As I listened, I realized that my initial emotional opposition to roundabouts was wrong. I had to accept the fact that roundabouts are not only safer, but that they will also provide a higher level of service and greater landscaping opportunities. The presentations that I listened to changed my mind. Based on the information that has been provided, I must tell you that I enthusiastically support the use of roundabouts on Shiloh Road.

24c. Comment noted.

24d. I also hope that Shiloh Road will receive significant landscaping in order to create an attractive and distinctive entrance to the city of Billings. In my opinion, landscaping will be one of the most important features of this new road. Trees and shrubs will soften the appearance of the road, will help to muffle the sound of the vehicles, and will make this a much more attractive place. Please include significant amounts of landscaping in the design of Shiloh Road.

24d. Upon project approval, landscaping would be determined during final design, and in consultation with the City of Billings.

Comment 24 (cont.)	Response
I understand that Shiloh Road (as it is currently proposed) will connect to King Avenue, with King being a two-lane east/west road. The City of Billings has plans to widen King from 31st Street to Shiloh. However, that project may be delayed beyond the Shiloh completion date. Regardless of when King is widened, Shiloh should be built to connect to King Avenue as a four-lane road. It would be unfortunate to put the curb, gutter, sidewalks, landscaping, and irrigation systems in place only to have them torn out a year or two later when King Avenue is widened. I want to encourage MDOT to work with the City of Billings to coordinate the construction of Shiloh Road with the widening of King Avenue. King Avenue should be rebuilt, and should be widened prior to the Shiloh Road project. Again, I want to reiterate that I enthusiastically support the proposed alternative. I hope that the Montana Department of Transportation will start construction as soon as possible. Sincerely, DOUG JAMES DJ:ssm	**24e.** This has already been considered in the preliminary layout of the roundabout at King Avenue, and both the east and west approaches would be designed for a future connection to 4-lane roadways from the east and west. MDT and the Consultant will continue various discussions with the City of Billings and adjacent property owners to see if the 4-lane roadways will be constructed prior to, concurrent with or subsequent to the Shiloh Road project. **24f.** Comment noted.

Comment 25	Response
RECEIVED FEB 12 2007 ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER FILE COPY 925 Bluegrass Drive West Billings, Montana 59106 February 8, 2007 Jean A. Riley, PE MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief Montana Department of Transportation 2701 Prospect Avenue P.O. Box 201001 Helena, Montana 59620-1001 **RE: Comments to Environmental Assessment for MDT Road Project, Shiloh Road Corridor, STPU 1031(2); CN 4666** Dear Ms. Riley: **25a.** There are serious flaws in the above-described Environmental Assessment (EA) and in the selection of the Preferred Alternative involving the construction of roundabouts at eight intersections along Shiloh Road. It appears the Preferred Alternative was selected in deference to the Montana Legislature's approval of House Joint Resolution 12, which encourages construction of roundabouts in general throughout Montana, instead of the selection being made based upon sound judgment for this specific project. These flaws in the EA and in the selection of the Preferred Alternative include, but are not limited to, the following: **25b.** 1) Given the projected high average annual daily traffic volumes of over 38,000 vehicles/day along part of Shiloh Road, and that Shiloh Road will be designed for four lanes of traffic, the Preferred Alternative will result in a significant and unacceptable safety hazard to pedestrians/bicyclists attempting to cross Shiloh Road, or any of the arterial roads at intersections with Shiloh Road. This situation is particularly hazardous for handicapped, elderly, or blind persons who attempt to cross the roads. It is ludicrous to assume a raised central median and reduced traffic speeds associated with roundabouts will provide adequate safety measures to pedestrians/bicyclists attempting to cross the roads. The only means to provide adequate safety to pedestrians/bicyclists is to provide for crosswalks that are protected by traffic signals. **25e.** 2) Given the hazardous situation created for pedestrians/bicyclists by the Preferred Alternative as described in Comment "1" above, no provision has been made to provide pedestrian underpasses or overpasses to allow pedestrians/bicyclists to safely cross the high-volume roads. Pedestrian underpasses and/or overpasses should be incorporated into the design plan for the Preferred Alternative (or any other alternative involving roundabouts), and the estimated cost of these structures included in the total cost for the Preferred Alternative (or any other alternative involving roundabouts).	**25a.** As presented in the EA, roundabouts were analyzed in detail for safety, capacity, and travel efficiency, as well as economic, environmental , and community impacts. **25b.** Two-way traffic volumes on Shiloh Road are estimated to range from 7,500 vehicles per day to 38,100 vpd. On the sidestreets, traffic volumes are estimated to range from 1,940 vpd at the west approach of Hesper Road to 17,700 vpd on the east approach of Zoo Drive. Roundabouts have been demonstrated across the United States to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. In addition, Montana State statutes require motorists to yield to pedestrians at marked crosswalks (please see comment/response #3). **25c.** Please see comment/response #3 regarding design of roundabouts for compliance with ADA. **25d.** Pedestrian signals, whether at a signalized intersection, mid-block crossing, marked crosswalk, roundabout or other location do not ensure the safe negotiation of a pedestrian across a roadway. Responsibility lies with the pedestrian and the motorist to recognize one another and obey laws that are in place. **25e.** Please see comment/response #2e regarding access improvements to the existing underpass at Colton Boulevard. In addition, please see comment/response #20d regarding a proposed underpass between Broadwater Avenue and Grand Avenue. Please see comment/response #22c regarding feasibility of grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle crossings recommended in *the Heritage Trail Plan*.

Comment 25 (cont.)	Response
25f. 3) Given the hazardous situation created for handicapped, elderly, or blind persons by the Preferred Alternative as described in Comment "1" above, it appears the Preferred Alternative (or any other alternative involving roundabouts) is not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, or other similar State and Federal laws. Whatever alternative is selected, it must conform to all applicable State and Federal laws designed to protect disabled persons. **25g.** 4) Relatively few multi-lane (two or more travel lanes) roundabouts have been constructed in the United States, and the overwhelming majority of studies published on the safety and potential benefits of roundabouts are based on single-lane roundabouts involving light to moderate traffic volumes. Thus, references to the safety and potential benefits of roundabouts described in the EA refer to roundabout design concepts that are not applicable to the roundabout design concept of the Preferred Alternative (or any other alternative involving roundabouts). The EA has failed to adequately document, including references of unbiased, professional, peer-reviewed papers and studies, the safety and potential benefits of high-volume, multi-lane roundabouts, such as proposed in the Preferred Alternative (or any other alternative involving roundabouts) **25h.** 5) To properly account for the total cost of the Preferred Alternative (or any other alternative involving roundabouts), using generally accepted cost-accounting practices, the initial costs of installing the existing traffic signals and intersection design at Shiloh Road, Central Road, King Avenue, and Hesper Road must be escalated, to account for inflation, to the year 2009 (the basis year for citing costs in the EA), and those costs added to the total cost of the Preferred Alternative (and any other alternative involving roundabouts). It is deceptive and fraudulent to ignore the initial costs (escalated) of the traffic signals and intersection design recently installed (within the past 6 years) at Shiloh Road, Central Road, King Avenue, and Hesper Road. **25i.** 6) Given the large disparity of traffic volumes between Shiloh Road and some of the intersecting arterial roads within the EA area, traffic will likely back-up and result in congestion on the arterial roads as vehicles are unable to enter the roundabout due to the dominant flow of traffic on Shiloh Road. This situation is not addressed in the EA. **25j.** 7) The EA has failed to address the likelihood of retrofit installation of timed traffic signals for the Preferred Alternative (or any other alternative involving roundabouts) to prevent queuing at each proposed roundabout and to allow traffic to safely enter each proposed roundabout. The estimated cost of retrofit traffic signals for the Preferred Alternative should be included in the total estimated cost of the Preferred Alternative. **25k.** The installation of single-lane roundabouts at intersections involving light to moderate traffic volumes has the potential to improve traffic safety and to provide other benefits. However, the installation of multi-lane roundabouts on Shiloh Road, such as is proposed in the Preferred Alternative, and in the other alternatives involving roundabouts, will be overall detrimental to the public good. **25l.** The best solution to satisfy all the needs of the Shiloh Road project would be to not install roundabouts as described in the Preferred Alternative, or in any other alternative involving roundabouts, and, instead, to select the alternative which allows the installation of traffic signals	**25f.** Please see comment/response #3 regarding design of roundabouts for compliance with ADA. **25g.** Please see comment/response #2d regarding roundabout safety statistics. Ourston Roundabout Engineering (ORE) performed a peer review of the preliminary design of the roundabouts and traffic analysis. ORE are experts in the field of roundabouts and traffic engineering and perform peer reviews of roundabout designs across the country. **25h.** For the signalized intersection or roundabout intersection alternatives, the existing intersections would be completely reconstructed. The basis for cost comparisons, therefore do not incorporate past expenditures for the existing intersections. All alternatives do include an inflation factor applied to current construction costs through the fiscal year of 2009. For additional information please see comment/response #23a. **25i.** Please see comment/response #22k regarding vehicle queues. **25j.** Please see comment/response #22k regarding vehicle queues. **25k.** The roundabouts proposed for this project are designed to accommodate anticipated high traffic volumes, while simultaneously providing safety benefits to the traveling public, through reducing the number of conflicts at the intersection and limiting speeds, thereby reducing the severity of accidents that may occur. Multi-lane roundabouts offer similar safety benefits to single-lane roundabouts, but the incidence of accidents is higher, due to their larger size (higher volumes) and higher-speeds.

Comment 25 (cont.)	Response
	The safety performance of multi-lane roundabouts is particularly sensitive to design details. Most safety benefits observed at roundabouts are primarily a result of low speeds and proper vehicle deflection, which can be obtained through proper design. Please refer to comment/response #2d which further addresses multi-lane roundabout safety. **25l.** Please see comment/response #7a regarding evaluation of alternatives in the EA.
25m. at arterials with protected turn lanes. The traffic signals should be sequentially timed to allow for the safe and efficient flow of traffic on Shiloh Road. The traffic signals would also provide for the safe passage of pedestrians/bicyclists at intersections. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the subject EA. Regards, Jack Wunder JMW:nb	**25m.** The eight intersections evaluated under the preferred alternative are approximately 1/2-mile apart on average. Coordinated systems work well with closely spaced signals, typically less than 1/4-mile. Beyond that, traffic disperses and spreads out, reducing the effectiveness of a coordinated system. The pm peak-hour intersection LOS analysis for the Traffic Signals at Arterials and Major Development Alternative was performed with coordinated signal timing because the signals were closely spaced. The intersection spacing for the Traffic Signals at Arterials Alternative was not favorable for the coordination of the signals in the corridor; therefore, the pm peak-hour intersection LOS analysis for this alternative was performed without coordinated signal timing. For more information on pedestrian signals please see comment/response #25d.

Comment 26	Response
A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact U web page. Action Item: Comment on a Project Submitted: 02/07/2007 08:25:56 Project Commenting On: Shiloh Road Roundabouts Nearest Town/City to Project:Billings Name: David Stensrud Address Line 1: 3319 Lloyd Mangrum Ln City: Billings State/Province: MT Postal Code: 59106 Comment or Question: Jim, thank you for coming to Billings last night. Enclosed is a copy of the email I sent to Bill Kennedy this morning. Bill, Thank you for last nights meeting. As you know, I came prepared to voice my support of the new "Roundabout" plan on Shiloh. The officials at the meeting did a great job of updating us on the project. I do not profess to be an expert on this type of project, only that I have traveled where roundabouts are routine roadway intersections. I have found them to greatly help traffic flow and to reduce the risk of major accidents. Unfortunately, there are always those who oppose change or something different. Nothing I would have said last night would have changed their minds. As I understand your process, as long as my voice is heard, either at the meeting or via email, my opinion is noted. Thank you for the opportunity to express myself. I look forward to the upcoming upgrades on Shiloh and the new roundabouts. David Stensrud	**26.** Comments noted.

Comment 27	Response
>>> RON PEARSON 2/8/2007 12:01 PM >>> To Whom It May Concern: 02/08/70 **27a.** I did attend the Shiloh Road meeting on Tuesday evening (2/6), and found the presentation impressive. Just an empirical observation, the design of Shiloh seems completely adequate for the current volume of traffic. There is, however, one thing that concerns me, and that is future expansion. According to Tom Howard's January 6th Billings Gazette article about the Shiloh Road roundabouts, an estimated $750 million in new development is planned along the Shiloh Road corridor. This development is probably within the time-frame of the next couple years, and is likely just the beginning. The roadway is projected to have a 20-year life span. **27b.** It has not been explained by anyone how the volume of vehicular traffic ingress and egress expected to be generated in connection with the proposed $750 million Shiloh corridor 'development' has been factored into the proposed four-lane roadway with the features described. My concern is directly related to how King Avenue West in Billings is now handling traffic flow after introduction of the box stores and strip malls, etc. Billings draws shoppers from a large regional area, and King Avenue's ability to handle maximum traffic resulting from introduction of these stores ought to have been anticipated much better than what is now apparent. It's design and continued lack of completion is extremely disappointing! **27c.** Is this what we can expect within a few years along the new Shiloh Road? **27d.** Why not configure a minimum of 4 travel lanes in each direction on Shiloh, plus turning lanes, median, etc.? Unfortunately, I'm not aware if roundabouts are designed to handle that many lanes of traffic. However NOW is the time to get that issue resolved, and not after they are installed. If we build it, they will come. I hate to resort to cliches, but I believe it's true. Relatively speaking, there's still room to do it, and no barriers, except perhaps to our own thinking. We already have a 355-page environmental assessment and a $40 million price tag for this project. Waiting five more years won't make it any less expensive; in fact, by then this price will have likely doubled again. We need to get it going! **27e.** I appreciate your time! Thank you.	**27a.** Comment noted. **27b.** Please see comment/response #9e regarding the traffic model that was developed for this project to forecast future traffic volumes and patterns in the project area. **27c.** The traffic patterns on Shiloh Road would be substantially different than along King Avenue. Full accesses are only provided at 1/2 mile spacing, thereby minimizing interruption to the main traffic stream. In addition, the traffic flow would likely be continuously flowing, rather than the stop and go pattern that results on King Avenue as a result of the signalized intersections. **27d.** Please see comment/response #5a regarding constructing an eight-lane facility. **27e.** Comment noted.

Comment 28	Response
Subject: Comment on a Project Submitted A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page. Action Item: Comment on a Project Submitted: 02/04/2007 12:54:27 Project Commenting On: Shiloh Road round abouts Nearest Town/City to Project:billings Name: DAVID SEDER Address Line 1: 8520 LONGMEADOW DR City: BILLINGS State/Province: Mt Postal Code: 59106 Email Address: DAVESSATELLITE@MSN.COM **28a.** Comment or Question: I am in disagreement of your purposed traffic design to putting round about on Shiloh Road! **28b.** I have relatives who live in New Mexico that use round about and hate them, because at busy times if someone does not know how to use them **28c.** they slow or stop traffic for long periods. The other disadvantage is they use a lot larger area and with Shiloh having a large drain ditch near by this will raise the cost. **28d.** Also Shiloh is a truck route and everything I read about this type of intersection does not work well with trucks! I am not against modern technology but this is not an improvement to traffic control, because **28e.** so many drivers in this area will not understand or want to under stand their flow technic,causing slow traffic or accidents. **28f.** I hope you review this purposed traffic design further before implementing them in our area !!! Thank you DAVID SEDER BILLINGS MT 59106	**28a.** Comment noted. **28b.** Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts. Roundabouts that are designed with insufficient capacity will experience queues on the approaches. However, the roundabouts on Shiloh Road are designed to accommodate traffic flows efficiently through the year 2027 without substantial vehicle queuing (please see comment/response #22k for more information regarding vehicle queues). **28c.** The Shiloh Drain has minimal effect on the overall cost of the project, whether roundabouts or signalized intersections are utilized. The circular footprint of the roundabout is generally larger than the central area of the signalized intersection. However, the footprint of the roadway approaches on the four legs of the roundabout is generally smaller than for a signalized intersection. The signalized intersections require more width on the approaches, typically, to accommodate turn lanes and/or taper down to the adjacent existing roadway widths. **28d.** Please see comment/response #22e regarding accommodating trucks in roundabouts. **28e.** Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts. **28f.** Please see comment/response #25g regarding the peer review of the roundabout design. In addition, FHWA and MDT Traffic Bureau and other MDT departments, the City of Billings and Yellowstone County personnel have reviewed and would continue to review the design as it progresses through final design.

Comment 29	Response
29a. I do not feel there should be roundabouts built at intersections on Shiloh Road and at the airport. I am familiar with roundabouts used at intersections in Las Vegas and they were confusing and scary. I avoided them as much as possible. I think they are an especially bad idea in Montana, where most residents are more used to rural driving situations. Roundabouts would present a frightening new driving situation for people coming into Billings on an occasional basis. And that would make it more difficult to negotiate roundabouts for residents who were accustomed to using them. Roundabouts are a bad idea altogether and I would prefer to keep traditional intersections with traffic lights. Carol M. Ward Billings, MT	**29a.** The roundabout at Airport Road is not part of the Shiloh Road Corridor project. Please see the MDT website (http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml) for information regarding the Airport Road project. **29b.** Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts. **29c.** Comment noted.

Comment 30	Response
To whom it may concern: Please consider the following comments on the Shiloh Road Corridor EA: Motorized/Non-Motorized Conflicts at Intersections with Roundabouts. The draft EA has clearly places a priority on accommodating non-motorized use in the Shiloh Corridor. The horizontally separated non-motorized links included in the proposed design could help increase that use in the corridor. However, potential pedestrian conflicts at the proposed intersections may prove problematic. The Draft EA references subjective information from other states regarding pedestrian safety at intersections with modern roundabouts. The EA states that pedestrian safety will be enhanced due to slower vehicular speeds and the fact that vehicles are required to yield to pedestrians. However, with the continuous flow of vehicles, i.e. no signalized breaks in traffic, and projected volumes (especially during the AM and PM peaks), pedestrian comfort levels may well be diminished. If this is the case, non-motorized use of the entire Shiloh Corridor corridor will suffer. The EA would benefit from more discussion and analysis of the issue, including future remedial fixes for motorized and non-motorized conflicts at the intersections with roundabouts. Existing Intersection at Grand and Shiloh. The EA states that a mix of traditional and roundabout intersections is not advisable and, therefore, any mix was rejected. I would agree that a seemingly random mix of traditional intersections and intersections with modern roundabouts would likely be confusing. However, retaining the existing Grand Avenue traditional (signalized) intersection should be examined. Even though the northern limit of the project is Poly Drive, the average person considers the actual northern limit of the Shiloh Corridor to be Rimrock Road. Since the intersection at Rimrock and Shiloh is a newly constructed traditional intersection which is not being proposed for change to a roundabout, the 'actual Shiloh Corridor' will have a mix of intersection types. Because there are no intervening intersections between Rimrock and Grand, having the Grand Avenue intersection be the intersection where the traditional intersections start should not prove to be a problem. The existing Grand Avenue intersection is virtually new and appears to be functioning well, with sufficient capacity for the projected growth. On the surface, it would appear that significant savings would result from not having to demolish the existing intersection and construct a roundabout. A cost benefit analysis of retaining the existing intersection at Grand and Shiloh should be discussed and analyzed in the EA. Respectfully submitted, Mike Casey 3024 Marguerite Blvd. Billings, MT 59102	**30a.** Numerous studies have been conducted which discuss pedestrian safety and findings, roundabout statistics, and other information on roundabouts. Among the studies are the soon-to-be published NCHRP 3-65 Project (see comment/response #2d) which conducted field research and analysis on pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles using information from up to 300 roundabouts in the United States, including multi-lane roundabouts. Detailed studies on roundabouts include "Safety effect of roundabout conversions in the United States: Empirical Bayes observational before-after study." (Persaud et al. 2001. *Transportation Research Record* 1751:1-8. Washington, DC: Transportation Research Board); "Crash and injury reduction following installation of roundabouts in the United States." (Retting et al. 2001. *American Journal of Public Health* 91:628-31); and "Operational and Safety Performance of Modern Roundabouts and Other Intersection Types." (Eisenman et al. 2004. Final Report, SPR Project C-01-47. Albany, NY: New York State Department of Transportation). Please see comment/response #2e regarding the existing underpass and Big Ditch Trail that cross Shiloh Road at Colton Boulevard and the recently City-installed pedestrian warning system at Poly Drive. **30b.** No remedial fixes for motorized and non-motorized conflicts are anticipated with this project, as no problem has been identified. **30c.** Comment noted. **30d.** Please see comment/response #23f regarding retaining Grand Avenue signalized intersection.

Comment 31	Response
How many people in Billings do you suppose have ever driven on a roundabout? How many people in Montana or the surrounding states have ever driven on a roundabout? Driving on a roundabout is confusing and dangerous. Most people don't know where they are supposed to drive within a roundabout. Once you learn where to drive, then you are still subjected to the rest of the people who have no clue! With the number of visitors Billings gets from people who live in more rural areas of Montana, thinking that everyone is going to know how to drive thru a roundabout is absurd. I lived in the east for a number of years, and never did get used to driving thru roundabouts. They always seemed to be a circle of confusion. There is nothing "modern" about any type of roundabout. Please stick with traffic lights. Everyone knows what a traffic light means. Ruth Michel	**31.** Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts.

Comment 32	Response
32a. **32b.** **32c.** >>> Rick and Joyce 1/8/2007 7:30 AM >>> From your preferred alternative it appears that there will not be any stop ights on Shiloh, and those that are now installed will be removed. If so, I vote against it. My experience with roundabouts is not good. Perhaps the real reason that you prefer roundabouts is that they are relatively inexpensive. Installing roundabouts is a good way to keep traffic off of Shiloh asa many motorists will avoid this street and take 32nd.	**32a.** Yes, the design of Shiloh Road includes installing a total of eight roundabouts. The existing traffic signals at Grand and King Avenues, and the temporary signal at Central Avenue would be replaced with roundabouts. **32b.** Project cost was one of many factors used for selection of the preferred alternative as described in the EA. Please see comment/response #7a regarding evaluation of alternatives in the EA. **32c.** Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts.

Comment 33	Response
>>> Dennis Friesen 1/6/2007 7:20 PM >>> I think it is a great idea and am willing to practice using these intersections until I am comfortable with them. I have seen them in Europe and Australia and they work very well. Keep up the good work and don't be discouraged by the sign on Shiloh. Dennis Friesen	**33.** Comment noted.

Comment 34	Response
>>> tom wilde 1/6/2007 12:30 PM >>> **34a.** These are my comments: 1. Make sure medians are nicely landscaped, (the current exits look horrible **34b.** in the summer, dead grass, garbage). 2. Encourage Monumental Art in roundabouts, make this an attraction with western and animal art. Encourage a competition for the privately funded art. **34c.** 3. Expedite the construction, use Coal Severance monies if necessary. 4. Require subdivisions to have connecting roads, so its not necessary to **34d.** always get on shiloh to go to another store, business, etc. **34e.** This project has the potential to improve Billings image and economy, beautiful views of Beartooths, Rimrocks, and of course Monumental statues....	**34a.** Upon project approval, landscaping would be determined during final design, and in consultation with the City of Billings. **34b.** Your suggestion will be forwarded to the City of Billings. **34c.** State agencies, including MDT, can submit an application to the Coal Severance Tax Fund for money from this fund to be applied to projects. Funds are competitively awarded based on a ranking system and applications are assessed for such things as need, severity of impacts, availability of funds, and planning for impacts related to coal development. A second program that distributes coal severance tax monies, Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP), requires an application from a local agency in order to be considered for TSEP funds which could finance constructing or upgrading drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, sanitary or storm sewer systems, solid waste disposal and separation systems, and bridges. These projects are also competitively awarded based on a ranking system. Funds available through the Coal Severance Tax Distribution program have been used in the past for a transportation project in a coal producing area. The Shiloh Road project will not be applying for funds through this program because it would be difficult to demonstrate this project's link to coal development. **34d.** This project would limit the number and types of accesses onto Shiloh Road and therefore future development would be required to provide internal roadways for their desired site circulation. **34e.** Comment noted.

Comment 35	Response
From: LYNDEN SEARS [mailto:lsears8@msn.com] Sent: Monday, January 08, 2007 9:04 AM To: mdteiscommentsshiloh@mt.gov Cc: Kirk Spalding Subject: Comment on Shiloh EA I don't really think there needs to be a roundabout at the intersection of the JTL entrance. There is a lot of money involved here and should be spent to serve the greater public, no a private interprise.	**35.** A roundabout at the JTL/County access provides 1/2- mile spacing between King Avenue and Hesper Road. That 1/2- mile spacing is typical of the arterials in the corridor. Typical traffic engineering practice is to space arterials and major intersections at 1/2- mile intervals, thus providing a balance between access and mobility. The 1/2-mile spacing throughout the Shiloh Road corridor provides a reasonable distance for turn around movements (u-turns) where left-turns are restricted. The spacing also distributes traffic more evenly on cross streets or side roads, which optimizes intersection operations and maintains corridor mobility. In addition, a roundabout at the JTL/County access improves safety for all drivers on Shiloh Road by allowing the long gravel trucks to enter onto Shiloh Road safely.

Comment 36	Response
>>> Phil Bell 2/7/2007 8:10 AM >>> Regarding Feb. 6th,2007 public meeting on the proposed Shilo Rd. roundabouts....the vast majority of the people in attendance were against the proposal for **36a.** using roundabouts instead of traffic signal lights. I agree that the roundabouts are dangerous and very ill conceived. Pedestrians are at risk trying to cross the **36b.** street and traffic will be totally confused. Common since was flown out the window on this plan. The Billings driver mentality can be seen on the new road through Peter Yeagen golf course with the new median being destroyed by **36c.** drivers again and again. Please listen to the public and use a little common since. **36d.** Roundabouts are fine for 18th century Europe but not for Billings, Montana. Phil Bell	**36a.** Comment noted. **36b.** Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts. Please see comment/response #4a regarding pedestrian safety at roundabouts. **36c.** FHWA in conjunction with MDT reviewed the alternatives evaluation in the EA and considered public and agency input prior to selecting the preferred alternative. **36d.** Comment noted.

Comment 37	Response
>>> Brooke 2/11/2007 3:35 PM >>> Hello - here are some comments after the Public Hearing regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment document. Meeting 2/6/07 **37a.** Why wasn't the date, time and location of the February 6, 2007 Public Hearing published in the Billings Gazette the day of the meeting? Has the public **37b.** notice requirement been met? **37c.** Isn't the Institute for Highway Safety, whose statistics are extensively quoted, funded completely by the big auto insurance companies whose only concern is not public safety, but shareholders' profits? **37d.** Why does the EA say that there isn't a traffic signal at King Avenue, Page 3-4 and again on page 3-6? **37e.** Page 3-12 of the EA addresses access management and out-of-direction travel and states that signalized intersections do not provide readily available u-turns. Why do the interstate frontage roads in Texas and many major cities have left turn/U-turn lanes at traffic signals that work very well for millions of drivers? **37f.** Crash statistics from Table 3.11, Page 3-15 of the EA indicate that right angle crashes, the main type of accident roundabouts are supposed to eliminate, were less that 1/3 of the crashes occurring between 2001 and 2003. Don't the statistics show that right angle crashes aren't the main safety concern for Shiloh while rear end crashes, which will increase with roundabouts, are the main vulnerability? **37g.** Traffic signals provide predictable gaps for drivers wanting to exit an access and make a right hand turn back on to Shiloh. Won't roundabouts, which do not stop traffic, make it harder for drivers to make a right hand turn on to Shiloh? **37h.** Why did the presenters at the 2/6/07 omit reference to the 3 at grade crossing mentioned in the EA, i.e., Hogan's Slough multi-use path, Monad bikeway and proposed bikeway at Howard Avenue? **37i.** Can't a median (refuge) for pedestrian safety be built at the halfway point of signalized intersections just like roundabouts so pedestrians can focus on one direction of traffic at a time per Page 3-21 of the EA?	**37a.** Council of Environmental Quality regulations does not specify a notification period for a public hearing. MDT's Public Involvement Handbook suggests under an Environmental Assessment, which is applicable to the Shiloh Road Corridor project, to provide a minimum 15-day notice of the public hearing. A press release announcing the Public Hearing was released on January 5 and January 22, 2007 (33 days and 16 days prior to the Public Hearing). A display ad was also placed in the Billings Gazette on January 21 and February 4, 2007. Providing advance notice offers more opportunities for the public to plan on attending the public hearing. **37b.** Yes, the Public Notice requirement has been met. According to 23 CFR 771.111(h) (iv) MDT must provide "Reasonable notice to the public of either a public hearing or the opportunity for a public hearing. Such notice will indicate the availability of explanatory information. The notice shall also provide information required to comply with public involvement requirements of other laws, Executive Orders, and regulations." Please see comment/response #37a for specific public notices for the Shiloh Road Corridor Public Hearing. In addition to the media information, a newsletter announcing the Public Hearing was sent to the project mailing list and was available on the project website. **37c.** The IIHS website lists various insurance companies as supporters and funding mechanisms for the organization. Other data sources such as FHWA, Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), and Transportation Research Board (TRB) are listed as references for supporting research data.

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
	37d. We could not find a statement on pages 3-4 and 3-6 that says "there isn't a traffic signal at King." However, it is true that the King Avenue intersection is already signalized as inferred by Table 3.3 in the EA. Language that explicitly states that King Avenue is signalized will be added to Section 2.0 Clarifications to the EA in the FONSI. **37e.** Negotiating u-turns at a signalized intersection can require the motorist to evaluate conflicting traffic possibilities in several directions prior to completing the u-turn. For vehicles accessing the major roadway near the intersection, the motorist may be required to cross numerous travel lanes to get into the far left-lane for a u-turn. In addition, some signalized intersections may not allow u-turns for safety reasons. Roundabouts provide for safe, efficient and legal u-turn maneuvers, whereby the motorist has the right-of-way once it enters the roundabout and merely continues around the roundabout in the inside lane and exits into the inside lane of the exit approach if it has more than one exit lane. **37f.** Of the intersection-related accidents, right-angle collisions account for approximately 36%, and rear-end accidents account for approximately 46% of the recorded accidents for the period analyzed. Both rear-end and right-angle accidents had the same number of recorded injuries, indicating that on Shiloh Road the right-angle collision accidents have a higher accident severity rate. (Shiloh Road Preliminary Traffic Report, April 25, 2005). **37g.** For signalized intersections, gaps for accessing the roadway are dependent on the traffic stream characteristics, signal timing, and proximity of access to the signal. Traffic tends to disperse downstream of signals and platoon at the upstream approach while waiting for the green light. It is

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
	typically for traffic platoons to disperse beyond 1/4-mile from signalized intersections into a fairly random arrangement, which would be similar to the traffic stream entering, between and exiting the roundabouts. For accesses close to the downstream side of the signals, the gaps are fairly predictable for right-turns, and the gaps become less prominent as the accesses get further downstream from the signal. Accesses on the upstream side, in close proximity to signals are subject to blockage, as vehicles slow, and are queued at the signal. Access onto Shiloh Road with roundabouts would be based on the individual motorist determining a safe and acceptable gap in the traffic stream prior to entering onto Shiloh Road. **37h.** The project would provide an at-grade crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists near the proposed Monad Road primary bikeway and the proposed Hogan's Slough multi-use path. No new at-grade pedestrian/bicycle crossing would be provided at or near the proposed secondary bikeway at Howard Avenue. **37i.** Median refuge areas could be constructed at a signalized approach, although the scenario is very different. At a signalized intersection, the pedestrian gets essentially one crossing phase during the entire conventional signal cycle (typically 60 to 120 seconds) for all four approaches of the intersection. The pedestrian may then be in the refuge for an extended period of time waiting for the next crossing phase if they did not make it across during a single protected crossing period and chose to utilize the refuge area.

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
37j. Per the EA, Page 2-25, there is only a slight advantage to the preferred alternative. If the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Public Right of Way require pedestrian lights at multi-lane roundabouts by the time the project is under construction, as seems extremely likely given the danger to pedestrians of all types, won't the slight advantage of the Preferred Alternative will shift in favor of traffic lights at the intersections.? **37k.** The plans show a nice walking path and a nice multi-use path. Why is there no way to safely get back and forth across the east west and north south traffic? Page 8-4 of the EA states "Benefits of traffic signals compared to roundabouts include driver and pedestrian familiarity, and the visual and audible pedestrian cues from signals help pedestrians with disabilities and visual impairments." Additional mention in Table 8-1, Page 8-14. How can the **37l.** safety benefits of roundabouts be termed "astronomical" when there is a stated safety superiority for pedestrians and the visually handicapped with traffic signals? **37m.** Page 3-21 of the EA describes the significant disadvantages of roundabouts to pedestrians including physically handicapped, visually impaired, those with cognitive disabilities which includes children. How can the preferred alternative be the best choice for Shiloh Road when there is such an obvious safety disadvantage for those who want to cross the road to shop, visit a clinic, get to school, or use either the multi-use trail or the new sidewalk? **37n.** When will the MDT/FHWA decide how big trucks use the roundabouts? Some places in the EA imply that cars and trucks can go through side by side and other places indicate that trucks may be able to use both lanes of the roundabouts for right hand turns. This is a significant safety issue and the sooner it is cleared up the better for the public. **37o.** Why does the EA say that Canyon Creek Ditch crosses Shiloh Road north of Zoo Drive? **37p.** What government agency is going to install and maintain the abundant landscaping mentioned on Page 3-60 of the EA?	**37j.** The requirement in its draft form by the U.S. Access Board is specific to multi-lane approaches, and therefore not applicable to every approach of every roundabout in the corridor. It is also not known if there will be pedestrian volume warrants or other requirements that will need to be met as part of these guidelines. The effect of pedestrian signals on the operation of the roundabouts is anticipated to be minimal due to the infrequency of activation and minimal degree of disruption to the vehicles. Although changes in the ADA requirements may result in slight changes to specific criteria in the evaluation, for example, a slight increase in cost, these changes would not affect the overall results of the evaluation. Therefore, potential changes to the ADA guidelines would not likely result in a different selection of a Preferred Alternative. **37k.** For the preliminary design at each of the eight major intersections in the corridor (Zoo Drive, Hesper Road, JTL/County access, King Avenue, Monad Road, Central Avenue, Broadwater Avenue, and Grand Avenue) where intersection improvements are proposed, a crosswalk would be provided on both sides of Shiloh Road for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing in the north/south direction and most of the intersecting roads for crossing in east/west direction. **37l.** The lower frequency and severity of vehicular and pedestrian-related accidents, as documented in numerous studies, is why the roundabouts are described as being safer overall. **37m.** Based on a comprehensive evaluation of many factors, the Preferred Alternative was selected because, for this corridor, roundabouts would provide better LOS, reduced travel time, and potentially greater reduction in crash rates and

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
	severity, and reduced ROW acquisition requirements. **37n.** Please see comment/response #22e regarding design details with respect to trucks. **37o.** Shiloh Road crosses Canyon Creek Ditch just north of the access to ZooMontana. Language to this effect will be added to Section 2.0 Clarifications to the EA in the FONSI. **37p.** The South Shiloh Corridor Overlay District (City of Billings Ordinance No. 05-5314) establishes a zoning district intended to promote an aesthetically pleasing and distinct entryway corridor by "encouraging" abundant landscaping. Upon project approval, landscaping would be determined during final design, and in consultation with the City of Billings. MDT would install the landscaping and the City would maintain the landscaping in the ROW along Shiloh Road in all areas that are in the City of Billings or in Yellowstone County owned ROW where the City and County have a maintenance agreement.

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
37q. Will there be crossing guards all during the heavy traffic periods to protect children at the pedestrian crossings where traffic does not stop. Engineering Inc.s' engineers have told us that studies show vehicles stop for pedestrians in marked but unsignalized cross walks about 20% of the time. How will the project be designed to prevent an 80% chance a pedestrian will have a conflict with a vehicle each time an unsignalized cross walk is used. **37r.** **37s.** Why are the project engineers asserting pedestrian crossings at roundabouts meet the requirements of the ADA when there is no way for visually handicapped pedestrians to tell when a crossable gap is available or if all lanes of traffic have stopped. **37t.** Roundabouts removed from New Vineyard Avenue in Pleasanton, CA were not traffic circles; they were built in 2004. They were removed as a question of public safety as there were 9 accidents in the roundabouts in less than 2 years. Why do the engineering consultants continue to assert that all roundabouts removed are "old style traffic circles"? **37u.** What other communities of equal size and projected traffic density, and weather conditions have a series of 8 multi-lane roundabouts in 4.5 milers operating safely and efficiently? **37v.** Specifically, what happens when there is an accident requiring emergency vehicles and law enforcement in a roundabout and how is traffic rerouted to keep it flowing? **37w.** Where else have the project engineering firm, its consultants and the Montana Department of Highway designed and built equivalent multi-lane roundabouts and are they operating safely and efficiently? **37x.** What is the origin of House Joint Resolution 12 which is quoted in the EA, Page 2-17; i.e. were the lobbyists from the Auto Insurance Industry, from the Trucking Industry, from MDU Resources. **37y.** Section 4E.06 "Accessible Pedestrian Signals" of the Millennium Edition of the MUTCD states that "factors that might make crossing an intersection difficult for pedestrians with visual disabilities include:...traffic circles...". This section goes on to give guidance on how to design the installation of devices to aid the visually and hearing impaired safely cross intersections. Which types of devices are planned for the roundabouts on Shiloh Road? **37z.** Which roundabouts will have pedestrian signals and which direction (north/south) (east/west) will be the traffic be controlled?	**37q.** The use of crossing guards during heavy traffic periods is not part of this project. **37r.** It has been widely observed that motorists frequently fail to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, even though most motorists are aware of this legal requirement. For instance, at five uncontrolled crossings in Madison, WI, the percentage of vehicles yielding to pedestrians who were starting to cross ranged from 0 to 10.6%. Another study reported greater variation in the percentage of pedestrians to whom approaching motorists yielded. Their results, from 11 different uncontrolled crossings in 4 states, ranged from 0 to 87%, with a mean of 50%. Another study reported on the percentage of pedestrians yielded to by approaching motorists and included data from eight uncontrolled crossings in seven states. Yield rates ranged from 0 to 58% and averaged 19% (FHWA Report No. FHWA–HRT–05–080 “Pedestrian Access to Roundabouts: Assessment of Motorists' Yielding to Visually Impaired Pedestrians and Potential Treatments To Improve Access”). The roundabouts and pedestrian crossings will be designed to federal and state standards. Vehicular speeds at the roundabout intersections would be moderated by the geometric design elements (splitter islands, circular path) of the intersection. The existing intersections have no geometric design elements to moderate vehicular speeds. Moderated speeds do make the pedestrian environment safer than an environment without moderated speeds. Please see comment/response number #3 regarding state law for yielding to pedestrians at marked crosswalks (MCA 61-8-5). **37s.** Please see comment/response #3 regarding ADA compliance of roundabouts on Shiloh Road.

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
	37t. Engineering, Inc., as the prime engineering consultant for MDT on the Shiloh Road project acknowledges that one or more roundabouts in the United States have been removed. In reviewing the Pleasanton City Council minutes from the April 16, 2006 council meeting, the roundabout in Pleasanton, CA was initially installed to accommodate anticipated traffic flow patterns that would result from the construction of a 600-student elementary school and to calm traffic in proximity to the schools. The introduction of the roundabout did result in some accidents, apparently. Typically, when an intersection is introduced to a roadway where the main-line was previously uncontrolled, there are accidents that result. The school was still not built when City Public Works was contacted on February 21, 2007 by Engineering, Inc., and the roundabouts had been removed. Please see comment/response #1a regarding removal of circular-type intersections in other states and countries. **37u.** The number of roundabouts in series is not a factor in terms of overall intersection operation, unless the intersections are very close together and are not designed for equal level of service operation. Calculations indicate that the lack of stopping at the roundabouts has a compounding benefit compared to the signalized intersection when the signalized intersections cannot have good timing coordination, as on Shiloh Road with the equivalent number of eight signals (signals are too far apart for good progression of vehicles). There are numerous examples of corridors with a series of roundabouts in a single roadway corridor, but not eight, that the Consultant team could find. The traffic loading patterns of any corridor would be unique to each location and different than Billings.

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
	Avon, CO has five roundabouts in approximately 1/2- mile and have operated very well since they were constructed in 1997; the roundabouts are designed with capacity of up to 6,000 vehicles per hour and their configurations are similar to those proposed for Shiloh Road. Malta, NY has five in approximately 1/2- mile. Similar examples of series of roundabouts exist in many other locations and climates. Numerous roundabout corridors are planned with more than eight roundabouts, including Detroit, Michigan, Alachua County, Florida, and Fairfax, Virginia, among others. **37v.** Please see comment/response #10c regarding emergency vehicles in roundabouts. **37w.** ORE, which performed a peer review of the roundabout design, has extensive experience with the design of multi-lane roundabouts across the United States since 1984. Among their achievements are the design of the United States' first "modern" roundabout in Las Vegas built in 1990, and America's first series of roundabouts to eliminate congestion in Avon, Colorado in 1997. **37x.** The primary sponsor of House Joint Resolution 12 (filed on April 11, 2005) was Representative Robin Hamilton. **37y.** At this time, no pedestrian signals are proposed for the crosswalks located at the roundabout intersections. The pedestrian crossings on the Shiloh Road project are being designed to all current federal, state, and ADA standards and guidelines. Changes to the standards or guidelines will be incorporated into the project as practicable. Currently, pedestrian signals are not required by formal standards or guidelines. In accordance with ADA guidelines, the hearing impaired would be provided with visual aids, including marked crosswalks and appropriate signage. Please see

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
	comment/response #3 for more information. **37z.** Please see comment/response #37y regarding pedestrian signals at roundabouts.

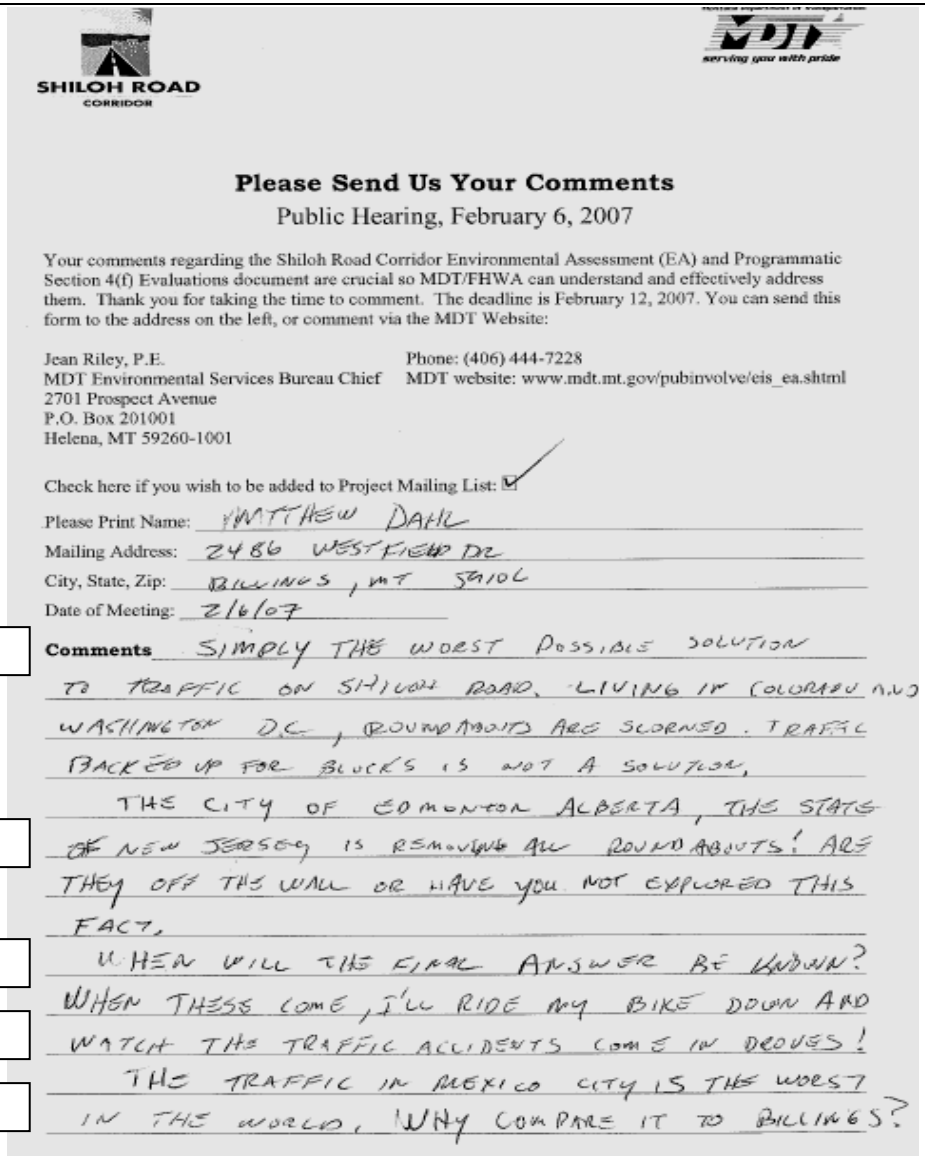
Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
37aa. When the Yellowstone County decide it needed access to its property from Shiloh Road rather from Hesper Road which it has always used? **37bb.** Is JTL (MDU Resources) paying for the installation of its own intersection, whether traffic lights or a roundabout? **37cc.** "Roundabouts: An Information Guide, Section 5 - Safety, Page 119, the Department of Transportation clearly describes the safety hazards to visually impaired pedestrians, people in wheelchairs and children when crossing a multi-lane roundabout. How is the Shiloh Road project going to protect these users? **37dd.** How much will the design remedies to the safety problem for pedestrians add to the cost of the project and won't this make the traffic signals alternative preferable? **37ee.** Per the minutes of the Traffic Research Board's Roundabouts Subcommittee (1/25/06), The ADA Public Rights of Way Guidelines call for signals for multi-lane roundabouts. What type of pedestrian signals does the MDT plan to install to meet the guidelines and will they be north south as well as east west? **37ff.** Where did the safety statistics in the EA come from and what types of intersections were replaced? **37gg.** The City Council rejected a roundabout at the intersection of Wicks Lane and Main Street because it cost $140,000 more than a traffic signal. (Billings Gazette, August 2004) - Why isn't this large cost difference reflected in the alternatives for Shiloh Road. **37hh.** What will trigger a change in the FHWA/MDT's preferred alternative? **37ii.** How will filing an Architectural Barriers Act Complaint with the Access Board about the inaccessibility of the multi-lane roundabouts to visually handicapped individuals affect the schedule for this project? Brooke Flynn [redacted]	**37aa.** Current access to the JTL facility off of Shiloh Road is also a joint access to Yellowstone County property, so access to the County property needs to be considered. The proposed roundabout at the JTL/County access also allows for a future connection from development anticipated east of Shiloh Road which would alleviate traffic loading at the King Avenue/Shiloh Road intersection. **37bb.** As with existing intersections, the cost of intersection improvements (i.e. the proposed roundabout) at the existing JTL/County access is covered under the federal and state funds allocated for the project. Future connections to Shiloh Road intersections are not part of the project costs. **37cc.** Please see comment/responses #37r regarding pedestrian safety while crossing Shiloh Road and arterials at intersections. **37dd.** At this time, no "design remedies" are anticipated with this project as the project would be built according to MDT policy guidelines and standards. **37ee.** The guidelines are in draft form and may or may not be adopted as presented in the current draft. As with any new guidelines for roadway projects, FHWA and MDT would consider and respond appropriately to new guidelines if adopted. **37ff.** The IIHS, along with researchers from Ryerson Polytechnic University and the University of Maine, conducted a comprehensive study of crashes at 24 intersections in California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, South Carolina, and Vermont before and after construction of roundabouts (Status Report, Volume 35, No. 5 - IIHS, May 13, 2000). The roundabouts replaced intersections that were either stop-controlled

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
	or traffic signals. The study found a 39% overall decrease in crashes, a 76% decrease in injury - producing crashes, and as much as a 90% decrease in fatal or incapacitating injuries. **37gg.** If this is in reference to the August 10, 2004 article in the Gazette, the intersection was actually the Wicks Lane/Governor's Boulevard intersection, which involved a fairly simple installation of a signal at an existing intersection without substantial geometric improvements required for the signal. For the Shiloh Road corridor, based on future traffic volumes substantial geometric improvements would be required for all intersections. The signalized intersections on Shiloh Road would typically require one or more auxiliary lanes (right-turn or left-turn lane) on each approach. To construct auxiliary lanes requires the roadway widen and taper down prior to and subsequent to the intersection, respectively. For Shiloh Road, the distances often exceed 305 m (1,000 ft) for these transitions. With the roundabouts, auxiliary lanes are generally not needed, so transitioning in and out of the roundabouts is very different. In fact, on Shiloh Road the four-lane section with median actually narrows significantly prior to entering the roundabout. Where exit lanes transition from two lanes to one lane on the sidestreets, the transition distance is much shorter due to the slower exit speeds. The narrower footprint prior to and subsequent to the roundabouts result in reduced construction costs and reduced right-of-way and impact to various resources. **37hh.** The Code of Federal Regulations, 23 CFR 771.119 (i), states; "If, at any point in the EA process, the Administration determines that the action is likely to have a significant impact on the environment, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be required." No

Comment 37 (cont.)	Response
	significant impacts were identified for the Preferred Alternative. **37ii.** The pedestrian crossings on the Shiloh Road project are being designed to all current federal, state, and ADA standards and guidelines. Any changes to the standards or guidelines will be incorporated into the project as practicable. If an Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) complaint to the Access Board was filed, any delays this may have to the project schedule cannot be determined at this time.

Comment 38	Response
SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR Montana Department of Transportation MDT serving you with pride **Please Send Us Your Comments** Public Hearing, February 6, 2007 Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website: Jean Riley, P.E. MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief 2701 Prospect Avenue P.O. Box 201001 Helena, MT 59260-1001 Phone: (406) 444-7228 MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☐ Please Print Name: Elizabeth Chavez Mailing Address: 4535 Upland Dr. City, State, Zip: Billings, MT 59106 Date of Meeting: 2/7/07 **Comments** I am concerned about the safety of the Shiloh Pedestrian Crossings. Since there will be no traffic signals, a steady flow of traffic would pose a problem with the pedestrian "right of way". Therefore, I feel pedestrian signals would be a better alternative.	**38.** Please see comment/response # 25d regarding pedestrian safety at signalized intersections.

Comment 39	Response



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Please Send Us Your Comments

Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

Jean Riley, P.E.
MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☑

Please Print Name: MATTHEW DAHL
Mailing Address: 2486 WESTFIELD DR
City, State, Zip: BILLINGS, MT 59106
Date of Meeting: 2/6/07

Comments SIMPLY THE WORST POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO TRAFFIC ON SHILOH ROAD. LIVING IN COLORADO AND WASHINGTON D.C., ROUNDABOUTS ARE SCORNED. TRAFFIC BACKED UP FOR BLOCKS IS NOT A SOLUTION, THE CITY OF EDMONTON ALBERTA, THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY IS REMOVING ALL ROUNDABOUTS! ARE THEY OFF THE WALL OR HAVE YOU NOT EXPLORED THIS FACT,

WHEN WILL THE FINAL ANSWER BE KNOWN?

WHEN THESE COME, I'LL RIDE MY BIKE DOWN AND WATCH THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS COME IN DROVES!

THE TRAFFIC IN MEXICO CITY IS THE WORST IN THE WORLD, WHY COMPARE IT TO BILLINGS?

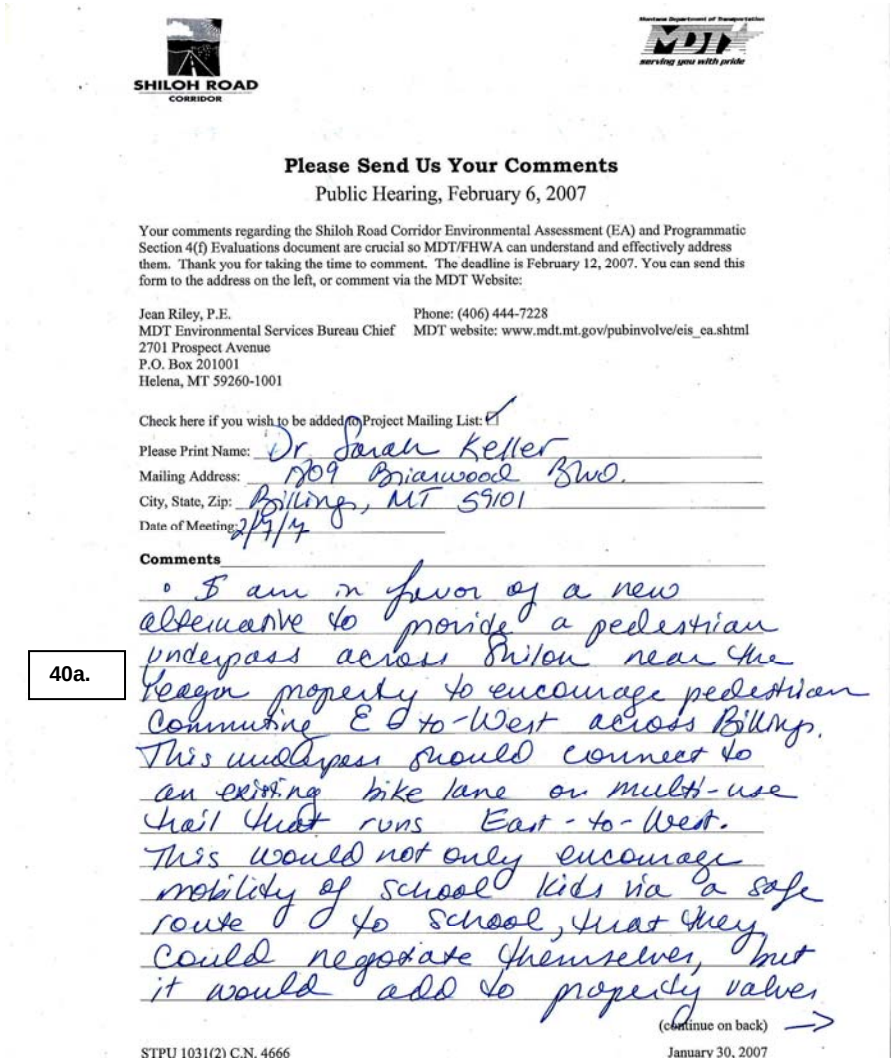
39a. Comment noted.

39b. Please see comment/response #1a regarding removal of circular-type intersections in other states and countries.

39c. The Selected Alternative will be identified in the Decision Document (Finding of No Significant Impact [FONSI]) prepared for this project. A notice will be sent to the project mailing list notifying the public of the availability of the FONSI.

39d. Comment noted.

39e. The EA did not compare the City of Billings to Mexico City. This comment is in regard to a comment from an individual during the Public Hearing (see Formal Public Hearing Transcript in Appendix A).

Comment 40	Response
	**40a.** Please see comment/response #20d regarding proposed pedestrian underpass between Broadwater Avenue and Grand Avenue.

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Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ✓

Please Print Name: Dr Sarah Keller
Mailing Address: 709 Briarwood Blvd.
City, State, Zip: Billings, MT 59101
Date of Meeting: 2/7/7

Comments

I am in favor of a new alternative to provide a pedestrian underpass across Shilon near the Keagan property to encourage pedestrian commuting E & to-West across Billings. This underpass should connect to an existing bike lane on multi-use trail that runs East-to-West. This would not only encourage mobility of school kids via a safe route to school, that they could negotiate themselves, but it would add to property values

(continue on back) →

STPU 1031(2) C.N. 4666 January 30, 2007

Comment 40 (cont.)	
by providing trail access to adjacent properties North - South along Shiloh. (The proposed N-S trail is great, but it <u>needs</u> to be connected to an East - West trail network!) • I support the "preferred alternative" in all other capacities. But keep in mind, parents will <u>not</u> want their children to cross Shiloh w/ roundabouts or signals — the underpass would be the only safe access for kids! • At Roundabouts, fines & signage <u>must</u> be used to enforce motorist respect for pedestrians.	**40b.** Please see comment/response #2e regarding improving access to the existing pedestrian underpass at Colton Boulevard. **40c.** Enforcement of traffic violations is not within MDT's and FHWA's jurisdiction.

Comment 41	Response

SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR

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Please Send Us Your Comments

Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

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MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☐

Please Print Name: Tim Brill
Mailing Address: 4440 Ridgewood Ln S.
City, State, Zip: Billings MT 59106
Date of Meeting: 2/6/07

Comments

41a. 1) Commend you in incorp. Sidewalk & especially bike/ped path along Shiloh. This will contribute to health, safety, mobility, as well as economic/tourism enhancements to the community.

41b. 2) Critical issue: the Round-abouts do not allow safe crossing for ped/bike crossing (East to West) of Shiloh. (ped alt) technically this does not meet the P&N Statement and also triggers a human health & safety concern which results in a Significant impact that must be addressed through analysis. Example to support concern: School crossing on Shiloh @ Poly. the City recently installed a light/speedometer to slow traffic during school hours. With this improvement, Shiloh is wide →

(continue on back)

41a. Comment noted.

41b. Based on analysis in the EA, no significant impacts were identified. Pedestrian and bicycle conditions would be improved over existing conditions under this project because facilities dedicated to pedestrians and bicyclists are provided north-south along Shiloh Road. For the east-west crossings of Shiloh Road, crosswalks would be included at the eight roundabout intersections. Therefore, the project meets the Purpose and Need statement by accommodating pedestrians and bicycles. Please see comment/response #2e regarding the existing underpass and Big Ditch Trail that cross Shiloh Road at Colton Boulevard. Please see comment/response #20d regarding proposed pedestrian/bicycle underpass of Shiloh Road between Broadwater Avenue and Grand Avenue.

Comment 41 (cont.)	
enough and speed fast enough to make a safe crossing seem formidable. Trying to get across at peak hours or dusk is hazardous and impossible. The nearby tunnel off-sets this impact. Proposed New Alternative. 41c. → to provide for a safe crossing across Shiloh, I proposed that at least 2 signals or 2 tunnels under Shiloh be constructed. This would allow for 2 access points (East to West) that are safe for pedestrians. This would meet the P&N and ~~not create~~ avoid a significant impact to health & human safety. Access c Roundabouts does not provide for safe crossing. Motorists, truck traffic, etc. will not always notice someone trying to cross @ a Rond-about as the line of vision as they are focusing on the turn will not give notice to pedestrians.	**41c.** MDT has assessed grade-separated pedestrian crossings at the locations identified in the City's *Heritage Trail Plan* and determined that crossings in these locations are not feasible (see Appendix C; pages 2-28 and 2-29). Please see comment/response #2e regarding improving access to the existing pedestrian underpass at Colton Boulevard and comment/response #20d regarding a proposed pedestrian/bicycle underpass between Broadwater Avenue and Grand Avenue.

Comment 42	Response

SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR

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Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☐

Please Print Name: Randy Reger
Mailing Address: Box 1782
City, State, Zip: Billings, Mt.
Date of Meeting: 2-6-2007

Comments

42a. 1. Bury Power lines along Shiloh Corridor

42b. 2. Re-Construct Shiloh Drain and Hogan Slough under BBWA CANAL North of Hesper Rd.

42a. MDT and the Consultant team conducted several meetings with power companies to develop cost estimates for numerous scenarios, including burying the power lines along Shiloh Road. By a margin of $2 million to $3 million, the costs of burying power lines exceeded overhead relocation. Due to this cost, this project would not bury the overhead powerlines. If private parties desire burying power lines, they would have to secure funding to pay the cost differential and there could be additional costs associated with operation and maintenance of buried facilities, which have a shorter service life compared to overhead power lines.

42b. Shiloh Drain and Hogan's Slough would remain open and undisturbed to the maximum reasonable extent due to the cost and environmental importance of the waterways, including minimizing potential flood risks. Please see comment/response #6e regarding burying Shiloh Drain.

Comment 43	Response
SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR Montana Department of Transportation MDT serving you with pride **Please Send Us Your Comments** Public Hearing, February 6, 2007 Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website: Jean Riley, P.E. MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief 2701 Prospect Avenue P.O. Box 201001 Helena, MT 59260-1001 Phone: (406) 444-7228 MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☐ Please Print Name: ART NEILL Mailing Address: 7645 GOODMAN RD City, State, Zip: E. HELENA, MT 59101 Date of Meeting: 06 FEB 2007 **Comments** I support the concept of roundabouts for Shiloh Road.	**43.** Comment noted.

Comment 44	Response

SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR

Montana Department of Transportation — MDT — serving you with pride

Please Send Us Your Comments

Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

Jean Riley, P.E.
MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☑

Please Print Name: Joan Sorenson
Mailing Address: 4555 upland Dr
City, State, Zip: Billings MT 59106
Date of Meeting: 2/6/07

Comments From my experience in NJ — which admittedly has different traffic volumes & perhaps different driver "styles" than we have right now in Montana — I am worried about the safety of round-abouts. Navigating lane changes - both your own & those of other drivers — in order to effect left hand turns is dangerous business under all but the very lightest of traffic flows.

I would like to see an elucidation of the safety data on Round abouts vs. lighted intersections - under different traffic conditions - for both cars & pedestrians

44a.

44b.

44c.

44a. Please see comment/response #2d regarding demonstrated safety at roundabouts.

44b. There should not be any lane changes in a modern roundabout. Motorists have the right-of-way once they are in the roundabout, and are to stay in their lane until they exit. If the circle is greater than approximately 61 m (200 ft) in diameter, it is likely a traffic circle and not a roundabout. It is important to note that there are many varieties of circular intersections. The older traffic circles (also referred to as rotaries) are much larger, often contain three or more circulating lanes, have high circulating and entering/exiting speeds and motorists in the traffic circle often yield or stop for entering vehicles. Most roundabouts in the United States are smaller (less than 61 meters (m) [200 feet (ft)] in diameter) and require entering vehicles to yield to circulating traffic.

44c. Please see comment/response #2d regarding safety data for vehicles at roundabouts and comment/response #30a regarding safety of pedestrians at roundabouts.

Comment 45	Response

SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR

Montana Department of Transportation — MDT — serving you with pride

Please Send Us Your Comments

Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

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MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☑

Please Print Name: Joan Sorenson
Mailing Address: 4555 Upland Dr.
City, State, Zip: Billings MT 59106
Date of Meeting: 2/6/07

Comments I am a parent of an Arrowhead Elementary school student. My son walks or bikes to & from school whenever possible. During 3rd & 4th grades I routinely accompanied him to the school crossing at Poly and Shiloh. Now that he is in 6th grade, he more frequently uses the whole distance or the larger part of it himself. I still ~~am~~ observe the crossing once every week or 2 weeks however.

45a.

45b. The independence + physical ~~exercise~~ fitness fostered by walking + biking to school is something I think our community values. As the volume of traffic on Shiloh + onto its intersecting streets increases, + as the complexity of the Shiloh roadway + its intersections increase, please maintain a high priority for ~~the~~ safety of our children!

45c.

(continue on back)

45a. Comment noted. Please see comment/response #2e regarding the existing underpass and Big Ditch Trail that cross Shiloh Road at Colton Boulevard and the recently City-installed pedestrian warning system at Poly Drive. It would be determined in final design if the new pedestrian signal would be continued or replaced with something more suitable for the specific site.

45b. Comment noted.

45c. Overall, pedestrian and bicycle conditions under this project would be improved over existing conditions because of providing facilities dedicated to pedestrians and bicyclists along Shiloh Road and improved safety conditions provided by the eight roundabout intersections. The project would provide an at-grade crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists near the proposed Monad Road primary bikeway and the proposed Hogan's Slough multi-use path identified in the *Heritage Trail Plan*. In addition, please see comment/response #20d regarding a proposed pedestrian/bicycle underpass between Broadwater Avenue and Grand Avenue.

Comment 46	Response

SHILOH ROAD
CORRIDOR

Montana Department of Transportation
MDT
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Please Send Us Your Comments

Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

Jean Riley, P.E.
MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☐

Please Print Name: Joan Srenson
Mailing Address: 4555 Upland Dr
City, State, Zip: Billings MT 59106
Date of Meeting: 2/6/07

Comments ~~It's~~ Please publish in some form The answers to all questions & comments submitted regarding this project - perhaps on your website?

46. All questions/comments received during the Public Comment period, and responses to these questions/comments are available to the public in the Decision Document (Finding of No Significant Impact [FONSI]) prepared for the Shiloh Road Corridor project. This document is available to the public, including being posted on the MDT website. A notice will be sent to the project mailing list notifying the availability of the FONSI.

Comment 47	Response

SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR

Montana Department of Transportation MDT serving you with pride

Please Send Us Your Comments

Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

Jean Riley, P.E.
MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☐

Please Print Name: Darlene Tussing — City/County Planning Dept. (Alternate) Trails Coordinator
Mailing Address: 3033 Derwent Pl
City, State, Zip: Billings MT 59106
Date of Meeting: Feb. 6, 2007

Comments I am pleased to see that there are off-street multi-use path facility planned for all this project. My greatest concern is that Shiloh does not become a barrier for bike + pedestrians to cross Shiloh. The underpass that has been already constructed in the Cotton corridor is so effective to help move children, families + commuters east + west under Shiloh so there is no conflict with bike + pedestrians with vehicular traffic. I do appreciate the fact that underpasses are expensive and the costs of this project have escalated, but still feel we need to be concerned about the concern of safely crossing and providing connectivity to the network of future trail systems.

47a.

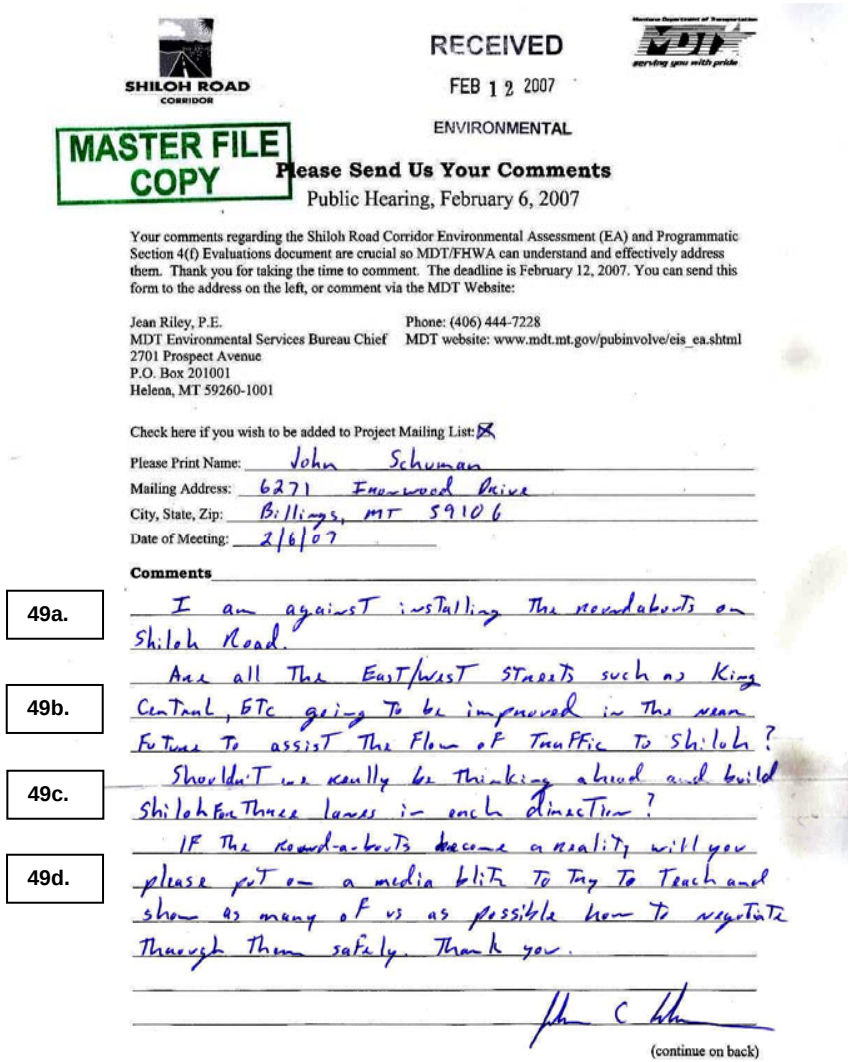
47b.

47a. Comment noted.

47b. Please see comment/response #45c regarding pedestrian and bicycle conditions.

Comment 48	Response
Shiloh Road Corridor EA **Public Hearing – February 6, 2007** Questions submitted by Ed and Gloria Horab, Ponderosa Townhomes Unit 47 (625 S. 38th Street West) **48a.** **48b.** **48c.** 1. As of now, how close will the nearest Ponderosa Townhome be when Shiloh Road is widened? We need to know this exact figure. Is there an alternative plan to give us more space? Is MDT planning to build the landscaped earth berm that we want? **48d.** 2. Does the open drainage channel (Shiloh Drain) restrict the location of Shiloh Road, and does this prevent MDT from giving us more space? **48e.** 3. Has anyone contacted our senators and representatives (federal and state) to ask for additional funding to enclose this channel and explain in detail why we need additional funding? We would like to read that letter if there is such a letter. **48f.** **48g.** **48h.** 4. Is there existing parkland along Shiloh Road? If so, can it be eliminated to gain more space? We do not have enough money to maintain the parks we have. **48i.** 5. If the value of our property along Shiloh is reduced as a result of the project will we be compensated for the reduction? Was this idea ever considered by someone connected with this project? If not, why not.	**48a.** Please see comment/response #6b regarding location of townhome. **48b.** Please see comment/response #6d regarding shifting Shiloh Road to the west. **48c.** Please see comment/response #6c regarding construction of landscaped berm. **48d.** Please see comment/response #6d regarding the Shiloh Drain constraints. **48e.** Please see comment/response #6e regarding Shiloh Drain and additional funding request. **48f.** Please see comment/response #6f regarding existing parkland. **48g.** Please see comment/response #6f regarding elimination of parkland. **48h.** Comment noted. **48i.** Please see comment/response #6g regarding compensation.

Comment 49	***Response***



SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR

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Please Send Us Your Comments
Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

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MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☒

Please Print Name: John Schuman
Mailing Address: 6271 Ironwood Drive
City, State, Zip: Billings, MT 59106
Date of Meeting: 2/6/07

Comments

49a. I am against installing the roundabouts on Shiloh Road.

49b. Are all the East/West streets such as King Central, 6Tc going to be improved in the near future to assist the flow of traffic to Shiloh?

49c. Shouldn't we really be thinking ahead and build Shiloh for three lanes in each direction?

49d. If the round-a-bouts become a reality will you please put on a media blitz to try to teach and show as many of us as possible how to negotiate through them safely. Thank you.

John C [illegible]

(continue on back)

49a. Comment noted.

49b. This project is only responsible for necessary improvements on the sidestreets to provide for a safe and efficient Shiloh Road intersection based on projected traffic flows and patterns.

49c. Please see comment/response #5a regarding information to address an eight-lane facility.

49d. Please see comment/response #8d regarding efforts to educate and assist drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts.

Comment 50

SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR

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Please Send Us Your Comments

Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

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Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: ☑

Please Print Name: Blanche Blum

Mailing Address: 626 S. 38th W. #49

City, State, Zip: Billings, Mt. 59102

Date of Meeting: 2-6-7

Comments Where Will the lighting be? Just at the round abouts - The full length of the Corridor? How will it be funded? by S.I.D. or new special lighting district? in our taxes?

50a.

50b.

50c.

Also Vibration from Heavy trucks Cause move-ment in my unit - I live closest to the road way In the ~~Pon~~ Ponderosa town Homes - #49 -

50d.

I'm also Concerned about sno and ice removal - Where will all the sno go during plowing?

50e.

Thank you for answering my Concerns -

(continue on back)

STPU 1031(2) C.N. 4666

January 30, 2007

Blanche Blum

Response

50a. The project includes installing new street lights throughout the full-length of the corridor.

50b. To help fund the maintenance of the new street lights it is anticipated that a new SID would be created to collect dedicated funds.

50c. The proposed road surface should be smooth initially and it would be up to the City of Billings to ensure it remains as such in future years after initial construction. If the roadway is smooth, the vibration from traffic is rarely perceptible. FHWA and MDT are not required to mitigate for vibration other than during construction.

50d. Snow is pushed outward from the central island and either piled in the boulevard area or removed from the intersection. A number of communities in snowy areas have installed roundabouts, including Hamilton, Ontario; Kemptville, Ontario; Howard (Green Bay), Wisconsin; Montpelier, Vermont; and Vail, Colorado. All have indicated that while there are some changes at first for snowplow crews, there are generally no major problems with snow removal in roundabouts. Roundabouts make it easier to turn snowplows.

50e. Comment noted.

Comment 51	***Response***

SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR

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Please Send Us Your Comments
Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

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MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: X
Please Print Name: Jim O'Tremba
Mailing Address: 5038 Coneflower Ave.
City, State, Zip: Billings MT 59106
Date of Meeting: 2/6/07

Comments In regards to the meeting that I attended I have never been to a meeting where the questions are not answered except by mail. My questions were asked by somebody else so I did not get a chance to ask mine.

51a.

I would like a copy of all the questions and answers from the meeting.

51b.

I have did some research in other states where the roundabouts do not work and are being taken out. I will have to go through them every time I go to town if they are put in. I am 100 percent against them being put in. A big waste of taxpayer money

51c.

Sincerely
Jim O'Tremba

(continue on back)

STPU 1031(2) C.N. 4666

January 30, 2007

51a. The presentation on February 6, 2007 was followed by a Question and Answer period. During this period the project consultants were available to answer questions to clarify technical issues from the material or presented in the open house and presentation. The Public Hearing is the formal process of collecting official comments, which are addressed in the environmental documentation.

Please see comment/response #46 regarding availability of responses to comments received during public comment period.

51b. Please see comment/response #1a and #37t regarding removal of circular-type intersections in other states and countries.

51c. Comment noted.

Comment 52	***Response***

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CORRIDOR

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C[illegible]

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Please Send Us Your Comments
Public Hearing, February 6, 2007

Your comments regarding the Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations document are crucial so MDT/FHWA can understand and effectively address them. Thank you for taking the time to comment. The deadline is February 12, 2007. You can send this form to the address on the left, or comment via the MDT Website:

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MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief
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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59260-1001

Phone: (406) 444-7228
MDT website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Check here if you wish to be added to Project Mailing List: [ ]

Please Print Name: Robert L. Erekson
Mailing Address: 541 Park Lane
City, State, Zip: Billings, MT 59102
Date of Meeting: 6 February 2007

Comments First; I do not believe my comments will have any effect on the Shiloh Road Project. However I wish they would!

52a.

After attending the meeting Tuesday 6 February 2007, I came away with the feeling that this project is going to be completed as planned. Regardless of the comments made!

I am sure you all remember Ralph Nader and his accusation of an Automobile Manufacturing Company producing a car that was "UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED"!!

52b.

As I see it and as was explained at the meeting you are creating 4.5 miles of roadway that will be "UNSAFE AT ANY TIME" for pedestrians (especially children), bicycles and the handicapped. There is no provision or way to stop traffic while the crosswalks are being used. Talk about poor planning, this has to be about as good as it gets.

52c.

To consider the amount of traffic, bikes and pedestrians that will be using this corridor, in the future, and make such a great bike path and sidewalk with no provisions to get across any of the roads at the eight 'roundabouts' is totally out of step with the citizens of this Great City of Billings.

We would be far better served with 8 sets of traffic lights. Salt Lake City has traffic lights all over and they are synchronized.. One can drive from down town to 106000 south on State Street (that is over 13 miles) and never stop one time because of the timing of the lights.

52d.

You seem to be concerned about the movement of traffic, then what is keeping you from installing a synchronized traffic light system, so one can drive the whole 4.5 miles at a predetermined speed, and in the meantime make a safe environment for pedestrians and bikes?

52a. Thank you for your comment. FHWA in consultation with MDT reviewed and took into consideration all public input received during the public comment period for this project.

52b. Please see comment/response #45c regarding pedestrian and bicycle conditions.

52c. Design of the roundabouts includes providing crosswalks for pedestrians and bicycles at all approaches.

52d. Based on analysis for this project, travel time would be less and average speed would be greater on Shiloh Road between Canyon Creek Bridge and Poly Drive with roundabouts instead of traffic signals. Please see comment/response #25m regarding coordination of signals.

Comment 52 (cont.)	***Response***
52e. Another question that was never answered, is why are Edmonton, Canada and New Jersey taking out their 'roundabouts'? What were all of the problems they encountered.? The answer I received while talking with one the committee members, after the meeting, was totally unsatisfactory. **52f.** I am also very disturbed that you plan to take out the lights at Shiloh & Grand Avenue, Grand Avenue & Zimmerman Trail and other locations and install 'roundabouts'. It would seem to me, you are more interested in spending taxpayer dollars than in really serving the community. Why remake intersections that are now functioning quite well? **52g.** To say you need 5 lanes to handle the traffic at each intersection in each direction is rather far fetched. In most cases 3 would be plenty. One for left turns and two for straight through. People who wanted to turn right could use the right lane. It would seem you are planning for the whole City of Billings moving to the Shiloh Road Corridor and yet there is very poor provisions for access from the property that will be developed on either side of the corridor. Sincerely R L Erickson	**52e.** Please see comment/response #1a regarding removal of circular-type intersections in other states and countries. **52f.** Please see comment/response #23f regarding improvements to Grand Avenue intersection on Shiloh Road. Although the Grand Avenue and Zimmerman Trail intersection is not part of this project, please refer to comment/response #9c. **52g.** Please see comment/response #5a regarding designing Shiloh Road with more travel lanes.

Appendix B

Publicity for Public Hearing – Advertisement, Press Release, Newsletter

Distribution List – Federal, State, and Local Entities and Public Locations Receiving EA

Montana Department of Transportation
MDT
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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY & PUBLIC HEARING

Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA)

Review of proposed mobility and safety improvements for Shiloh Road corridor

Project ID: STPU 1031(2), Control Number 4666

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has completed the Environmental Assessment and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations (EA) for the Shiloh Road corridor and the EA document is now available for public review and comment. The EA examines mobility and safety improvements proposed for the Shiloh Road corridor between Canyon Creek and Poly Drive.

The goal of the Shiloh Road Corridor project is to develop a preferred alternative for implementation of improvements in the Shiloh Road corridor that improve safety and travel efficiency and considers the context of the Shiloh Road corridor community. Elements considered in the proposed alternatives include an urban typical section, and considerations for access management, intersection control, pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements, and design treatments.

MDT, along with the Federal Highway Administration, invites interested individuals, organizations, and federal, state, and local agencies to review the EA and provide comments.

Viewing options

Anyone interested in reviewing the EA may view it online at **www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml** or at one of the following locations:

- MDT Billings Office – 424 Morey Street, Billings
- City of Billings Planning and Community Services Department – 510 North Broadway, 4th Floor Parmly Library, Billings
- MSU Billings Library – 1500 University Drive, Billings
- Will James Middle School – 1200 30th Street West, Billings

To request a hard copy of the EA, please contact MDT Environmental Services at (406) 444-7228.

How to comment

A six-week review period will **begin on January 8, 2007** and **conclude on February 12, 2007.** Oral or written comments may be presented at the public hearing being held on Tuesday, February 6, 2007 at 6:30 pm at Faith Evangelical Church (3145 Sweetwater Drive, Billings). Alternatively, written comments on the EA may also be addressed to Jean Riley, MDT Environmental Services, at 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001 or submitted online at *www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml* by **February 12, 2007.**

For further information

For more information, please contact Bruce Barrett, MDT Billings District Administrator, at (406) 252-4138 or Kirk Spalding of Engineering, Inc. at (406) 656-5255. MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any service, program or activity of our department. If you require reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact Mary Guse of David Evans and Associates, Inc. at 720-946-0969 or mrg@deainc.com at least two days before the meeting. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592, or call Montana Relay at 711. Alternative accessible formats of pertinent information will be provided upon request.

Public Hearing
6:30 pm – Tuesday, February 6, 2007
Faith Evangelical Church
3145 Sweetwater Drive, Billings

The following press release was distributed on January 5 and 22, 2007:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:
Bruce Barrett, MDT District Administrator, (406) 252-4138
Jean Riley, MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief, (406) 444-7228
Paul Grant, MDT Public Involvement, (406) 444-9415

Notice of Availability: Shiloh Road Corridor Environmental Assessment - Billings

(Billings) - Beginning January 8, an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations of the Shiloh Road corridor will be available for review and comment. The EA examines mobility and safety improvements proposed for the Shiloh Road corridor between Canyon Creek and Poly Drive.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) invite all interested parties to review the EA and provide comments at a public hearing on Tuesday, February 6, 2007, starting at 6:30 pm. The hearing will be held at the Faith Evangelical Church, 3145 Sweetwater Drive, (south of Central Avenue on 32nd Street West) Billings. An open house and brief public presentation will be held prior to the official public comment period. The presentation will summarize the project history, present the Preferred Alternative, and describe the environmental process.

Anyone interested in reviewing the EA may view it online at www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml or at one of the following locations:
* MDT Billings Office - 424 Morey Street, Billings
* City of Billings Planning and Community Services Department - 510 North Broadway, 4th Floor Parmly Library, Billings
* MSU Billings Library - 1500 University Drive, Billings
* Will James Middle School - 1200 30th Street West, Billings

A copy of the EA may be requested from MDT Environmental Services at (406) 444-7228.

Community participation is a very important part of the process, and the public is encouraged to attend. Oral or written opinions, comments, and concerns may be presented at the public hearing. Alternatively, written comments may also be submitted to Jean Riley, MDT Environmental Services, at 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001, or online at http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml. The review period for the EA will conclude on February 12, 2007. All public comments are due by February 12, 2007.

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve mobility and safety in the Shiloh Road corridor by increasing roadway capacity and providing bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements. Elements considered in the proposed alternatives include an urban typical section, and considerations for access management, intersection control, pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements, and design treatments.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any service, program or activity of our department. If you require reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact Mary Guse of David Evans and Associates, Inc. at 720-946-0969 or mrg@deainc.com at least two days before the meeting. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592, or call Montana Relay at 711. Alternative accessible formats of pertinent information will be provided upon request.

----------end----------

Project name: Shiloh Road Corridor - EA
Project ID: STPU 1031(2)
Control Number 4666
City of Billings, Yellowstone County

SHILOH ROAD
CORRIDOR
STPU 1031(2) CN 4666

Montana Department of Transportation
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Issue No. 4 January 2007

Public Hearing for the Shiloh Road Corridor EA

February 6, 2007
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Faith Evangelical Church
3145 Sweetwater Dr., Billings

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) invite all interested parties to review the EA and provide comments at a public hearing on Tuesday, February 6, 2007.

The agenda for the public hearing is as follows.

6:30 Open House – view project information and talk with project team members.

6:45 Presentation – summary of project history, Preferred Alternative, and environmental process.

7:15 Public Comments – public comments and statements are recorded.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any service, program or activity for our department. If you require reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact Mary Guse at 720-946-0969 or mrg@deainc.com at least two days before the meeting. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is 406-444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592, or call Montana relay at 711.

Environmental Assessment and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations Available for Public Review

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) proposes to reconstruct an approximately 7.2 kilometer (4.5 mile) section of Shiloh Road between Canyon Creek and Poly Drive to improve mobility and safety in the Shiloh Road corridor.

Elements common to all alternatives include an urban typical section (see illustration on page 4), considerations for access management, intersection control, pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements, and design treatments.

MDT is evaluating the impacts of these alternatives as they pertain to the transportation system, community resources, and natural resources along the Shiloh Road corridor. This evaluation of impacts is presented in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations, along with the MDT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Preferred Alternative for the Shiloh Road corridor. The Preferred Alternative is described on page 3. A public hearing will be held on February 6, 2007 to seek your review and comment on the evaluation of the alternatives. Final selection of the Preferred Alternative will be made by FHWA in consultation with MDT after review of public input.

EA Availability

The EA will be available for public review at the following locations beginning January 8, 2007. For a copy, call MDT at 406-444-7228.

MDT Billings District Offices
424 Morey Street, Billings

City of Billings Planning and Community Services Department
510 North Broadway, 4th Floor Parmly Library, Billings

MSU Billings Library
1500 University Drive, Billings

Will James Middle School
1200 30th Street West, Billings

MDT Website
www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml

Community participation is an important part of the process. The public is encouraged to provide comments. Written comments may be submitted to Jean A. Riley, PE, MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief, at 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001. Comments may also be submitted online at www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eis_ea.shtml. **The deadline for comments is February 12, 2007.**

SHILOH ROAD CORRIDOR
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Issue No. 4 **January 2007**

Summary of July 2006 Public Meeting

Thank You for Your Comments!

The third public meeting for the Shiloh Road Corridor project was held on July 26, 2006 at Faith Evangelical Church. Approximately 100 people attended. The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Present project status and final alternatives to be assessed, and
- Obtain input from the public on the typical section (including elimination of the rural typical section), design elements, corridor access management (access control), and intersection control.

Thanks to all the meeting participants and others who provided comments. The comments we received on the preliminary alternatives have been very useful and are summarized on the project website at www.shilohroadcorridor.com/pubmtg3.htm. The primary concerns included:

- traffic congestion at intersections
- heavy truck traffic in the corridor
- safety of drivers and pedestrians if roundabouts are constructed
- use of roundabouts by trucks with trailers and other drivers who are not familiar with roundabouts
- the level of landscaping that will be provided
- access for pedestrians and bicyclists
- storm water runoff
- the cost of the project and potential costs to property owners

Based on the public and agency comments and the evaluation of the final alternatives, the project team identified a preferred alternative to best address the traffic and access needs along the corridor. The Preferred Alternative is described on page 3.

Next Steps

Public Review and Comment Period for EA	**EA Available for Public and Agency Review** — **WE ARE HERE** **Public Hearing**
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)	**FONSI - Finding of No Significant Impact** Document alternative selected by MDT and FHWA for implementation if there are no significant impacts. If there are significant impacts, begin the process for an environmental impact statement (EIS). **Completion of Environmental Process**
Next Phases of Project	**Final Design & Permitting** → **Right-of-Way Acquisition** → **Construction**

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Preferred Alternative for the Shiloh Road Corridor

All build alternatives presented at the July 2006 Public Meeting achieve the project purpose and needs by improving mobility and safety within the Shiloh Road corridor. However, MDT and FHWA have identified a preferred alternative that best meets the project purpose and needs and is consistent with guidance offered by the Project Advisory Committee and the Billings City Council.

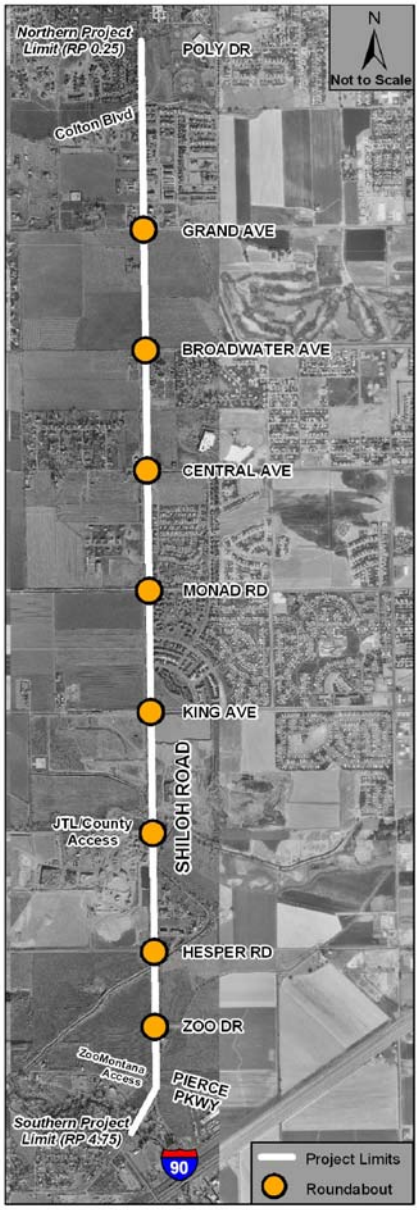
Elements of the Preferred Alternative are summarized below.

- **Corridor Typical Section:** Urban Typical Section (one or two travel lanes in each direction) including a sidewalk and multi-use path
- **Access Management Plan:** The proposed Access Management Plan would be consistent with MDT access control guidelines and would support the Billings area street grid system
- **Intersection Control:** Roundabouts providing full access would be constructed at Zoo Drive, Hesper Road, JTL/County access, King Avenue, Monad Road, Central Avenue, Broadwater Avenue, and Grand Avenue (There would be other limited access locations in accordance with the Access Management Plan.)

Modern roundabouts were selected over traffic signals because, for this corridor, roundabouts would provide:

- slightly better level of service,
- slightly reduced corridor travel time,
- potentially greater reduction in crash rates and severity, and
- reduced right-of-way acquisition requirements.

The locations of the eight roundabouts are shown in the adjacent figure.



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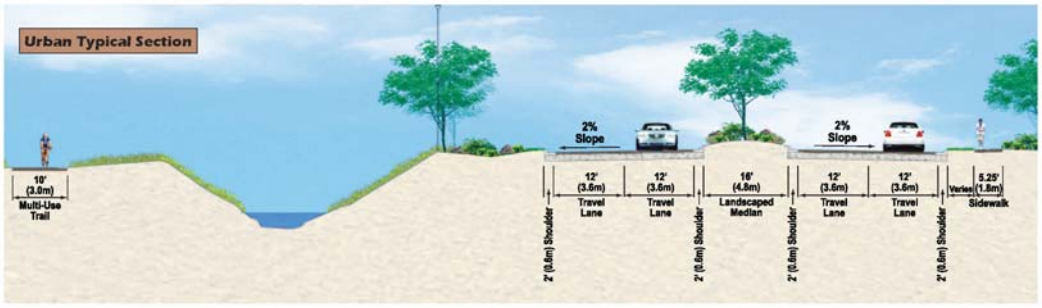
Issue No. 4 **January 2007**



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Bruce Barrett, District Administrator
Montana Department of Transportation
District 5
424 Morey St.
Billings, MT 59104-0437

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Distribution List – Federal, State, and Local Entities and Public Locations Receiving EA

Federal Agencies

US Army Corps of Engineers
Helena Regulatory Office
c/o Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
10 West 15th Street, Suite 2200
Helena, MT 59601
Mr. Allen Steinle, Montana Program Manager

US Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service
Federal Building, Room 443
10 East Babcock Street
Bozeman, MT 59715
Mr. Dave White, State Conservationist

US Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service
Billings Field Office
1629 Avenue D, Building A, Suite 4
Billings, MT 59102
Ms. Valerie Robertson, District Conservationist

US Department of Interior – Bureau of Land Management
5001 Southgate Drive
PO Box 36800
Billings, MT 59101
Mr. Gene Terland, State Director

US Environmental Protection Agency
Region VIII, Montana Office
301 South Park, Drawer 10096
Helena, MT 59626
Mr. John Wardell, Director

US Fish and Wildlife Service
Montana Field Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601
Mr. R. Mark Wilson, Field Supervisor

State Agencies

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Permitting and Compliance Division Lee Metcalf Building
1520 East Sixth Avenue
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620
Mr. Tom Ellerhoff

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Airport Industrial Park
1371 Rimtop Drive
Billings, MT 59105
Mr. Keith Kerbel, Regional Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105
Mr. Gary Hammond, Regional Supervisor
Mr. Jim Satterfield, Regional Supervisor
Mr. David Ellis

Montana Natural Heritage Program
Montana State Library
1515 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
Ms. Sue Crispin, Director

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
225 North Roberts
PO Box 201201
Helena, MT 59620
Dr. Mark Baumler, State Historic Preservation Officer

Montana Transportation Commission
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620
Mr. William T. Kennedy, Chairman

Local Agencies

Billings City Council
1945 Clark Avenue
Billings, MT 59102
Mr. Chris "Shoots" Veis, Ward 3 Council Member
Ms. Nancy Boyer, Ward 4 Council Member
Mr. Donald Jones, Ward 5 Council Member

City of Billings
PO Box 1178
Billings, MT 59103
Christina Volek – City Administrator

City of Billings – City and County Planning
PO Box 1178
Billings, MT 59103
Ms. Candi Beaudry, Director
Mr. Scott Walker, Transportation Planner

City of Billings – Metropolitan Transit
PO Box 1178
Billings, MT 59103
Mr. Ron Wenger, Transit Manager
Ms. Debra Hagel

City of Billings – Public Works
PO Box 1178
Billings, MT 59103
Mr. David Mumford, Director
Mr. Vern Heisler, City Engineer

K-12 Billings School District 2
415 North 30th Street
Billings, MT 59101-1298
Mr. Jack Copps, Superintendent

Yellowstone Conservation District
1371 Rimtop Drive
Billings, MT 59105-1978
Ms. LaVerne Ivie, Administrator

Yellowstone County Commissioners
PO Box 35000
Billings, MT 59104
Mr. Jim Reno, Chairman

Yellowstone County Planning Board
PO Box 20377
Billings, MT 59104
Mr. Doug Clark

Yellowstone County Public Works
PO Box 35024
Billings, MT 59104
Mr. Bob Moats, Director

Public Locations

MDT Billings District Offices
424 Morey Street
Billings, MT 59104-0437

MSU Billings Library
1500 University Drive
Billings, MT 59102-0298

City of Billings
Planning and Community Service Dept.
510 North Broadway
4th Floor Parmly Library
Billings, MT 59101

Will James Middle School
1200 30th Street West
Billings, MT 59102